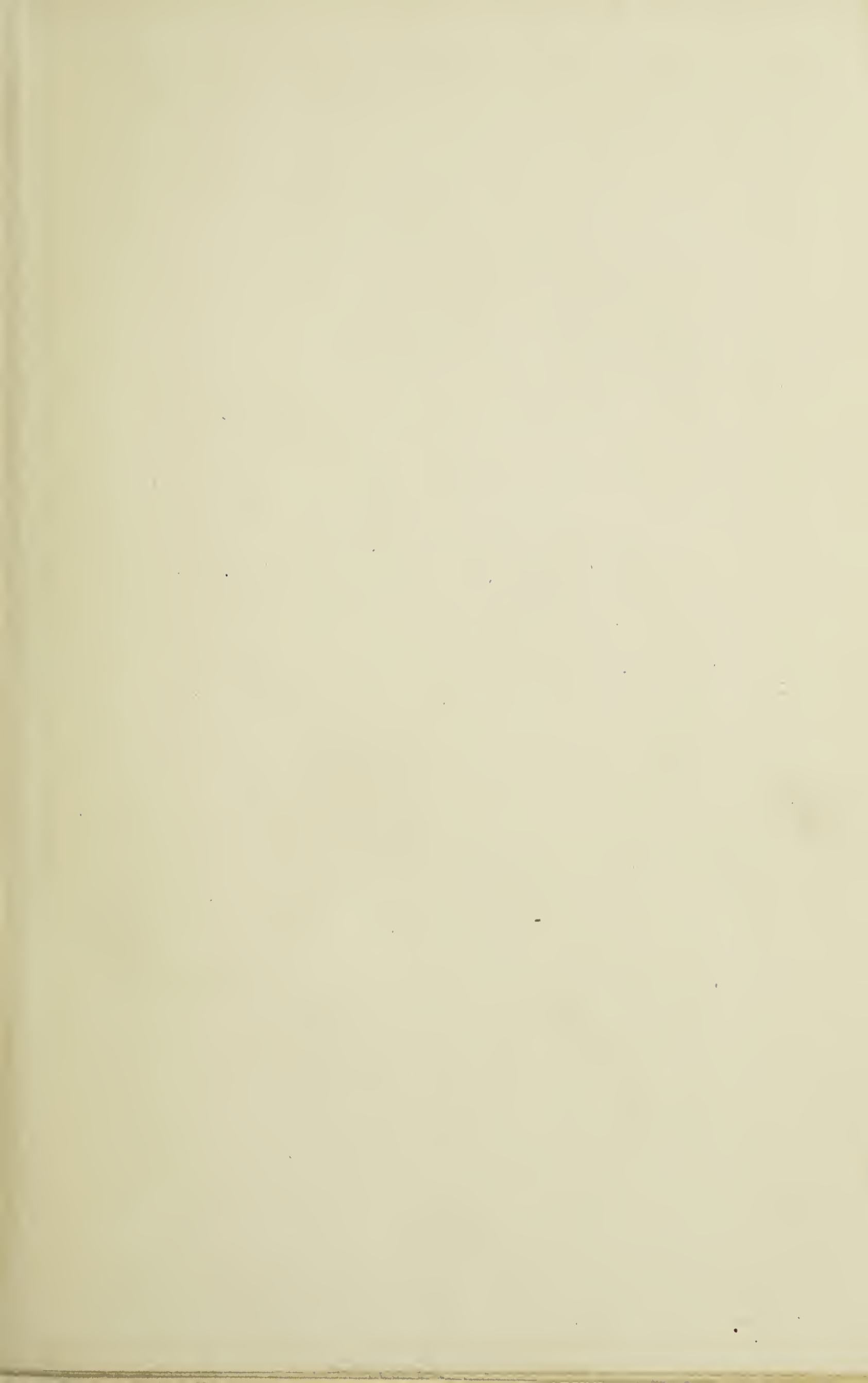






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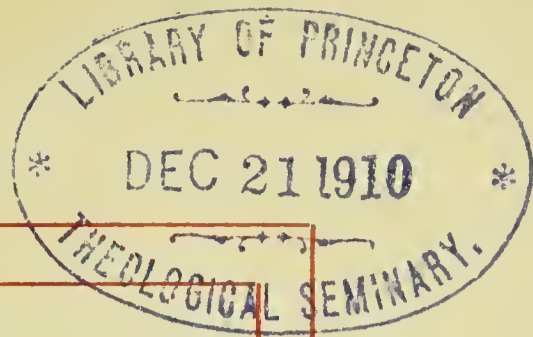
# PALESTINE











EDITION ARTISTIQUE

The World's Famous  
Places and Peoples



PALESTINE

BY  
JOHN FULTON, D.D., LL.D.

In Two Volumes  
Volume 1.

MERRILL AND BAKER  
New York

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# CONTENTS.

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CHAPTER	PAGE
I. JOPPA, . . . . .	1
II. FROM JOPPA TO JERUSALEM, . . . . .	30
III. BETHLEHEM, . . . . .	66
IV. THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT, . . . . .	90
V. THE RETURN FROM EGYPT, . . . . .	108
VI. PLAIN OF ESDRAELON AND NAZARETH, . . . . .	134
VII. FROM NAZARETH TO BETHABARA, . . . . .	163
VIII. FROM JORDAN TO JERUSALEM, . . . . .	195
IX. ANCIENT JERUSALEM—PHYSICAL AND HISTORICAL, .	216
X. ANCIENT JERUSALEM—THE WALLS, TOWERS, GATES AND WATER-SUPPLY, . . . . .	246
XI. WILDERNESS OF JUDEA, . . . . .	269
XII. BETHABARA, CANA, THE SEA OF GALILEE, . . . . .	293
XIII. FROM JERUSALEM TO THE BORDER OF SAMARIA, . .	329
XIV. SAMARIA, . . . . .	356
XV. TOWNS OF GALILEE—TYRE AND SIDON, . . . . .	391
XVI. FROM DECAPOLIS TO CÆSAREA PHILIPPI, . . . . .	421
XVII. ENVIRONS OF JERUSALEM, . . . . .	443
XVIII. MODERN JERUSALEM WITHIN THE WALLS, . . . . .	477



# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

## VOLUME I

---

	PAGE
BETHLEHEM . . . . .	62
WELL OF BEERSHEBA . . . . .	102
ANCIENT TOWER OF ZERIN, THE ANCIENT JEZREEEL	146
NAZARETH . . . . .	164
BETHANY . . . . .	208
STREET LEADING TO HEROD'S PALACE, JERUSALEM	228
POOL OF SILOAM, JERUSALEM . . . . .	254

A.



# PALESTINE: THE HOLY LAND.

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## CHAPTER I.

### JOPPA.

As the steamer plows its way eastward through the smooth waters of the Mediterranean, a pale blue line, deepening in color as we near it, rises over the horizon, and our hearts throb with pleasure and expectancy when we are told that it is the outline of the mountains of Judea. Soon, below the line of the distant hills, a bold rock looms in the distance, like a huge fortification. That is Jaffa, the Joppa of the Bible. In a little while we see the dark green of the orange groves to the northward; by and by we discern the waving tops of palm trees; then the many colored flags of the consulates, fluttering on their flag-staffs; and below, northward and southward, stretches the long line of yellow beach which is characteristic of the coast. A fleet of flat-bottomed boats is putting out to meet us, and very soon we are deafened with the loud, harsh, guttural cries and counter-cries of the boatmen by whose assistance we are to get ashore.

It is no trifling matter to get ashore at Joppa in the best of weather, and in bad weather it is quite impos-

sible. It is a dangerous coast, and there is no harbor worthy of the name. What is called the harbor of Joppa is only a small basin formed by natural rocks, partly visible and partly under water. There are three places at which an entrance to this basin might be made by small vessels. One to the north is broad, but dangerous on account of sand banks. To the south another, called the Moon Pool, is probably the opening through which the rafts of Hiram, King of Tyre, were towed into the inner basin, but it has long been practically closed by sand and silt. The only available entrance is on the northwest, where there is a passage of not more than a hundred feet in width, through which, however, only row-boats and small craft can pass. Through that passage our landing must be made with the help of those flat-bottomed cobbles with which our steamer is surrounded as she comes to anchor half a mile from the basin.

If it were a stormy day, the steamer would not stop here, but would go on to her next port at Haifa, near Mount Carmel; and if the rough weather continued, we might be taken on to Beirut and be compelled to enter the Holy Land far to the north and not at the south. The coast of Joppa is not only dangerous, but treacherous; storms blow up with incredible rapidity, and when the wind drives from the west, any unfortunate sailing vessel that may chance to be caught in it is in imminent danger of being swept upon the rocks. From the most ancient times we read of wrecks at Joppa; and not many years ago the remains of an ancient galley were dug up in some excavations on the shore. As Dr. Geikie says, Phœnician, Egyptian, Syrian, Roman, Crusading and modern fleets have all paid tribute to the angry



waters of this coast. The packet steamers are comparatively safe, but in rough weather they can never be sure of landing passengers.

To-day, luckily for us, the breeze is light and the water smooth. It will be well to lose no time in getting ashore, for it would take but a little while to change the aspect of the scene, and a rough landing would be disagreeable. There are sharks in these blue waves, and if our boat should upset, we might be deprived of a dry death, and yet not die the death of drowning. Let us go ashore, then. Three or four of us can take one of the boats at a cost of five francs for the party, or we can separate and go in different boats for a trifle less. Do which we will, we climb down the ladder and take our seats; the boatmen pull away until they reach the narrow inlet of the basin; then, waiting for the swell of an in-rolling wave, they give one tremendous pull, and we are safe in smooth water. So far well; but your tale of fresh experiences is not yet told. From the steamer you have reached the boat; with your boat you have reached the harbor; but you have yet to reach the shore. The boats cannot reach it on account of the shallowness of the water; therefore, resign yourself to the inevitable; throw yourself confidently, if not cheerfully, into the arms of that bare-legged, piratical-looking fellow in the water. There will be not a particle of sentiment in his embrace, and not a bit of generous gallantry in his attentions, which will cost you two or three sous. He will be useful to you, nevertheless, for in a few minutes he will bear you to the steps of the landing; he will set your feet thereon; perchance he will then give you an unexpected hoist which will be more helpful than gentle;

and in this unromantic way you will enter the Sacred Land of many a sacred dream.

Standing on those steps, with hoarse voices screaming around you in a language of which you know nothing but the always intelligible cry of "*Backsheesh!*" and with your baggage already on the way to a prosaic and annoying custom house, you will hardly be likely to indulge in the poetic musings you have often anticipated. It will not be worth while to attempt the impossible. Postpone your reflections to a more favorable moment, and, as the day is fine, take a stroll through Joppa, or *Jaffa*, as you will soon find yourself calling it. If you are wise, you will hire a donkey for the excursion, and you will very soon discover that there are no streets in Joppa; only narrow lanes, or alleys, or wynds, all as dirty as they are narrow, and some nearly as dark as they are dirty. The houses are built of tufa stone, and apparently with no windows. The windows of oriental houses do not open on the street, but on the inner court, except sometimes in the upper stories, which project so far as almost to meet above your head. There you will see small lattice windows through which, unseen by you, the women of the house, like the mother of Sisera, can look on what passes below. There is no such thing as a sidewalk, nothing of the nature of a pavement. The road is one general accumulation of filth, through which, if you had not hired a donkey, you would find it difficult to pick your way. One wonders sometimes when he reads of the ancient cities and buildings which are found by scientific excavators, buried many feet under cities and buildings of a later date; but the wonder grows less if we may suppose that the same filthy habits prevailed in ancient

times as now prevail at Joppa. People who throw all the refuse of their dwellings into the streets before their doors, might be expected in process of time to bury their houses under the accumulated rubbish.

Fortunately there is one, though there is only one, irregular thoroughfare, which leads from the north end of the quay where you landed, into the small bazaar, and, further on, into the Arabian bazaar. It is not a thoroughfare for wheeled vehicles; there are no wheeled vehicles in Joppa. Baggage, goods and merchandise are carried by brawny porters, whose strength and skill in handling their loads are marvelous. No weight seems to be too great for them. Their only tool is a rope of camel's hair, with which they tie together whatever is to be carried; and often the burden is much greater in size and weight than the bearer. Six or eight porters will carry a hogshead of sugar with apparent ease; and when the porter is once under way, he has all the rights of the road; you will do well to get out of his way, he will be at no pains to get out of yours. Besides porters, you are very sure to meet water-carriers, bearing skins full of water to be delivered to the inhabitants. These are the only water-works, or rather they are the water-workers, of Joppa. Donkeys you will be sure to meet, as they are driven along with loads of merchandise and provisions out of all proportion to the size of the poor, patient, sturdy little beasts. The camels will impress you with a feeling of pity. A camel is not a happy creature; everything about him tells you that of all the brute creation which man has subjected to his service, the camel is the least contented with the state of life into which he has been called. He is often mercilessly treated,

hard-worked, under-fed; and being never cleaned, he almost invariably becomes a victim of a burning and devouring mange. Generally speaking, he is not a pleasant object to look at; and the unlovely are not apt to awaken much sympathy. Yet, though you cannot help him, you cannot help pitying him, as he goes by with that helplessly resentful look of unmerited suffering. You will probably have less pity for the dogs, which you will meet at every step. They, too, are vile, mangy, repulsive brutes, silent enough in the daytime, but at night snarling and snapping at you if you disturb or even approach them as they prowl in the street. They will not bite you; but they are an ever present offence to the eye. You would wonder that the inhabitants endure them if you did not know how useful these living nuisances are in removing a thousand other more deadly nuisances from these filthy streets. The dogs are the only scavengers; and since they can live in such numbers on the offal, they must be invaluable in devouring and thus removing many festering causes of sickness and death. These dogs belong to nobody in particular; and they are thorough democrats in this respect, that they will allow no canine aristocracy to live near them. No one can safely keep a pet dog, for the moment the unfortunate pet should set his paws outside of his home, the whole dog mob of the city would surround and destroy him.

As we pass the bazaar we shall not fail to observe the shops, booths and stalls in which business is transacted. A Syrian shop is very little like an English shop or an American store. The houses, as I have said, are built of stone; but not as European or American houses are

built. The walls are of immense thickness, as if intended to endure forever. Hardly any wood is used in any part of them, and the ordinary shop is simply a huge arch or opening cut out of the solid wall. Facing the street, sits the cross-legged merchant, ready to spend hours in haggling with customers over the price of his wares. At the East, time is of no particular consequence to buyer or seller; and if a bargain were to be concluded without chaffering, the seller would feel that he had asked too little, while the buyer would be persuaded that he had foolishly paid too much. How many kinds of huckster's stalls we find in this bazaar of Joppa! Almost anything answers the purpose. A bench will do; a shawl hung up for an awning makes a perfectly satisfactory tent or booth, under which the merchant sits on the ground. At the opening of one shop we see song birds for sale; hard by is a café for the refreshment of passengers; here is a rude smithy with a blacksmith plying his hammer; there a cobbler stitching away at shoes which are already worn out of all conceivable shape; yonder we must pass a carpenter whose work and implements send our thoughts swiftly to another workshop where a certain Youth grew up "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Here is a pottery shop with its light, brittle vessels of clay for sale at prices which would be incredibly cheap, if the ware were not so fragile as to be constantly breaking, and therefore, in the course of a year, costing a good deal to the families obliged to use it. Near by a saddler is conducting an animated process of bargaining with an Arab for a highly ornamented saddle on which the Bedouin imprudently casts longing and admiring glances.

Those injudicious glances are likely to cost him as much as the value of the saddle. Such is trade in Syria. Altogether, the shops and stalls for the sale of provisions seem much the more numerous. All around and along the sides of the bazaar are milk-stalls, bread-shops, fish-stalls, sausage shops and a rare display of all manner of fruits and vegetables.

The people we meet are as various, and, to our unaccustomed eyes, as curious, as other sights of this queer city. Besides Europeans and Americans, who are commonly called Franks, we meet dark-complexioned Levantines, wearing the European dress, stately Arabs and Turks, with turbans and flowing robes, European and Asiatic Jews and negroes, wearing the red fez with blue cotton jacket and trousers. Women of all classes go closely veiled. We shall get used to these strange figures very soon, no doubt; just at first they are somewhat bewildering. But what is this? A woman without a veil, and therefore a Christian, with rings on her arms and fingers, and her face tattooed! It is an uncanny sight; one wonders how a woman could think to add to her attractions by such hideous ornamentation; and yet we know that the practice of tattooing the face and body has been common at the East from very early times.

There is little to detain us in the city proper; there is much to draw us to the country beyond. For our lodging while we stay, we may betake ourselves to the Latin Hospice, where three priests and four monks of the Roman Catholic Church are ready to receive us with Italian hospitality, or to the magnificent convent of the Greek Church, from the terraces of which we shall have a grand view of the city, the sea and the coast. Not less

attractive is the Armenian Convent, where Bonaparte received a noble rebuke from a gallant and conscientious man. In 1799 the cells of the convent had been occupied by plague-stricken French soldiers, and before evacuating the city Bonaparte suggested to the surgeon Desgenettes that he would better quietly administer a heavy dose of opium to the sick and wounded soldiers who could not conveniently be taken away, and might be massacred by the Turks. To this cold-blooded proposal to anticipate Turkish massacre by Christian assassination Desgenettes replied, "Sir, it is my business to cure men, not to kill them!"

There are other places where, for a moderate compensation, we might find very good accommodations; but the ideal thing would be to get possession, as Dr. Thompson did, of one of the dwellings which are buried in a wilderness of lovely gardens and orchards all around Joppa. So enchantingly beautiful do these gardens and orchards appear that they remind one of the fabled gardens of the famed Hesperides. The soil is light and sandy, but it is made fruitful by irrigation; and irrigation is a matter of extreme facility throughout that region. By digging but a few feet wells are found with an abundance of water, which is raised by means of water-wheels and is conveyed in trenches to the gardens. The land is divided into plots, called *biaraks*, and separated from each other by tall hedges of cactus, which are so thick and so perfectly defended by the rude thorns and prickles of the plant as to be impenetrable to man or beast. Hardly any fruits fail to grow here. The orange, unknown to the ancient world, attains perfection, and so do the lemon, the pomegranate, the mulberry, the

peach, the apricot, the almond and the citron. The banana and the sugar cane thrive, but are not much cultivated. Vegetables have only to be planted to return large crops, but the variety found in the market is not great. The watermelon grows in such enormous quantities as to be sold for next to nothing. This bright and beautiful oasis extends for miles on the landward side of Joppa; and in the opinion of competent persons, it might be made to cover the whole Plain of Sharon, which has a soil of the same sort, and the same facilities for irrigation. Over that entire plain, as soon as the rain falls, rich and luxuriant vegetation clothes the earth, and only dies down when the sun has dried up the moisture. With little trouble it might again be made to "rejoice and blossom as a rose."

Tokens are not altogether lacking that the Holy Land is destined once again to be a rich, a fruitful, and a beautiful land. The Jew has never yet abandoned the dream of its restoration, and Christian nations look with interest and sympathy upon every effort to redeem it from its present state of desolation. While the hand of the Turk rests upon it, progress will continue to be slow; but there are signs of progress even now. Some years ago a railway was projected from Joppa to Jerusalem, and it has now been built. The Plain of Sharon is too valuable to be left untilled. If no one else sees its advantages, our own good Brother Jonathan will; and if he can get an "option" on the Plain of Sharon, he will sell it out in lots to settlers and speculators, as he has already sold millions of less fertile acres in the far west. As early as 1866 a German-American colony was established quite near to the Latin Hospice. It numbered originally some



forty families ; but it did not prosper, and hardly a trace of it remains. In 1868 another colony of Germans from Würtemberg was established a little further out from the city, and numbers at this time over three hundred souls. It is called the colony of the German Temple, and belongs to a sect of Christians who believe it to be the duty of all Christians to settle in Palestine. Their village, which they call Saron, is about two miles from Joppa, and is a thriving and attractive settlement. On the southeast of the town Dr. Geikie says that "a settlement of the Universal Israelitish Alliance has been able to obtain a tract of seven hundred and eighty acres, one-third of which, before unclaimed, they have turned into fruitful fields and gardens. Their vineyards, and those of others, skirt the orchards on the south, the vines trailing low over the sand, but yielding large and delicious grapes." All along the shore, to the south of Joppa, a compulsory settlement of Egyptian peasants, or Fellahin, was made under Ibrahim Pasha. There the unhappy creatures were left stranded, and there they are still living most wretchedly. War has left many sad marks in every part of Palestine ; and not far from the Fellahin villages, the spot is still shown where nearly three thousand Turkish soldiers were slaughtered by Napoleon's orders.

But we are getting into the history of Joppa ; we may as well take a hasty glance at it in chronological order.

Pliny and Pomponius Mela both tell us that Joppa, according to the prevalent traditions of antiquity, is more ancient than the flood ; but it can hardly be the flood of the Bible to which these historians refer. Joppa connects the Bible story of Jonah with the ancient legend of

Andromeda, which I may tell as follows: Once upon a time there was a king of the Æthiopians, whose name was Cepheus. The name of his wife was Joppa. These two had a daughter, who grew up in such extraordinary beauty as to cause her mother to boast that her daughter Andromeda was fairer than the Nereids themselves. At this the nymphs of the sea were highly incensed, and sought revenge for the insult. At their request Poseidon, god of the sea, sent a flood upon the land, and a monstrous beast withal, by whom the people were devoured. The oracle of Ammon declared that the land could be delivered from the monster and the flood only on condition that Andromeda should be chained to a rock beside the shore and left there as a victim to the deadly beast. Cepheus was compelled by the people to give up his child to that sad fate, and Pliny says that marks of the chain upon the rocks were still shown in his time. But before the monster could devour his prey, he was slain by Perseus. Andromeda became the wife of her deliverer and the founder of Joppa, which she named in honor of her mother. When she died, a place among the stars was given her, and she may yet be seen shining among the hosts of heaven. Long ages afterward, in the time of Pompey, the skeleton of a huge monster was discovered near Joppa, and was removed by Marcus Scaurus to Rome. It was found to measure no less than forty feet in length, and its backbone was eighteen inches in diameter. By the Romans, this huge creature was supposed to be the monster of the myth of Andromeda. By Christians, it was thought to be the whale of the book of Jonah.

Authentic history gives no account of the founding of

Joppa. At the time of the Israelitish conquest, it was already in existence, and it was given by Joshua to the tribe of Dan. The original inhabitants worshipped the goddess Keto, or Derketo, who was half fish, half woman. In the time of David, Joppa had become the port of Jerusalem, and it was to here that Hiram, King of Tyre, sent his floats of timber for the building of the temple (2 Chron. ii : 16). Five hundred years later, cedars of Lebanon were brought in the same way and to the same place for the use of Zerubbabel in building that second temple, which the presence of the Christ was to make more glorious than its glorious predecessor (Ezra iii : 7). Just when it was that Jonah set out from Joppa on his journey to Nineveh, or by what route he expected to reach his destination, or what the "ship of Tarshish" was in which he sailed, or what manner of whale it was that swallowed him, we must leave it to the commentators to tell; but our Saviour said that a sign like that of the Prophet Jonah was the only sign which should be given to the people of his own time: "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. xii : 40).

Joppa is famous in the history of the Maccabees. Judas Maccabeus captured it, burned the port and shipping, and signally avenged the death of two hundred Jews who had been treacherously destroyed. Jonathan and Simon Maccabeus also took Joppa; but they fortified it, placed a garrison there, and reopened the port.

Pompey made Joppa a free city of Rome. Cæsar restored it to the Jews. Herod the Great occupied it, and his possession of it was confirmed to him by the Emperor

Augustus. After the death of Herod it was given to Archelaus; but it was taken from him ten years later, and from that time remained under the authority of the Roman governor of the province.

We hear repeatedly of Joppa in the New Testament. The gentle and charitable Tabitha, or Dorcas, had her home, so the tradition runs, in one of the garden orchards in the neighborhood; it was there that St. Peter raised her to life after her real or supposed death (Acts ix: 36-43); and it was from the house of Tabitha that the same Apostle went and "tarried many days with one Simon, a tanner" (Acts ix: 43). There, in the house of Simon, the great Apostle had his famous vision of a sheet let down from heaven, containing all manner of beasts, clean and unclean.

At the time of the Jewish insurrection which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem, Joppa was taken and sacked. Subsequently it was rebuilt and became a nest of pirates, whom Vespasian destroyed. When the town was captured the pirates took to their ships, but a west wind drove them back upon the shore, and those of them whom the waves spared were mercilessly cut down by the Roman soldiers.

Joppa rose once more from its ashes and became the see of a Christian bishop; but again it fell in the Arab invasion of 636, and was held by the Arabs until the Crusades. In 1099 it was abandoned by the Arabs and occupied by Christians; and, in spite of many attacks, it remained a Christian city till 1187. In that year it was captured by Malek-el-Adel, brother of Saladin, who destroyed it in the following year. In 1191 it was occupied and its walls were rebuilt by Richard Cœur de Lion, who had his

quarters in one of the garden-orchards of the suburbs. In the following year, after Richard had departed, it was besieged by Saladin, but Richard came to its relief and raised the siege. Five years later, however, it was taken again by Malek-el-Adel, and it is said that 30,000 Christians were put to the sword. From that time its fortunes varied until 1267, when it was completely devastated. For some centuries following we hear nothing of Joppa, but it gradually rose again into some importance, and its importance brought its usual misfortunes. In 1722 it was sacked by the Arabs; in 1775 by the Mamelukes; and in 1799 it was occupied by Bonaparte. The city was afterward fortified by the English, and the fortifications were extended by the Turks, who still hold it. These fortifications have fallen into decay, but the gates of the city are novelties to the traveller, and are sure to attract his attention.

Surely a troublous history has been that of Joppa. Its name, *Yapho*, which is variously interpreted to signify *Beauty*, or *Tower of Delight*, suggested no prophecy of its many misfortunes. As Dr. Thompson says, "the mere name is a romance;" but its history is a romance of many tragedies. An unknown poet sings of it:

"Oldest of cities! Sidon of the North,  
 And Kirjath-Arba of the rocky South,  
 And Egypt's Zoan cannot equal thee.  
 Andromeda and Perseus, if the lay  
 Of classic fable speak the truth, were here;  
 Monarchs of Palestine, and Kings of Tyre,  
 And the brave Maccabee have all been here.  
 And Cestius, with his Roman plunderers,  
 And Saladin, and Baldwin, and the host  
 Of fierce crusaders from the British North,  
 Once shook their swords above thee, and thy blood  
 Flowed down like water to thine ancient sea."

At the present time Joppa has a population of something over 13,000 souls, of whom 10,000 are Mohammedans, 1500 are Christians of the Greek Church, 700 are Armenians, 350 are Latins, that is, members of the Roman Catholic Church, and the rest are Jews or Germans and other Protestant and oriental Christians. It has a considerable trade with Egypt, Syria and Constantinople. Its exports are chiefly soap, sesame, wheat and oranges. Some few years since, silk culture was introduced into the plain of Sharon. The principal source of the wealth of Joppa is derived from the annual passage of pilgrims through the town to visit the holy places, which are objects of veneration not only to Jews and Christians, but also to Mohammedans.

There are not many objects of special interest in Joppa itself. The convents already mentioned are well worth a visit, and the principal mosque of the city is a striking building. Several places claim the distinction of having been the site of the house of Tabitha, and perhaps one which is situated about three-quarters of a mile to the east of the town is the least improbable; but that the site of a private dwelling should still be ascertainable after so many ages, so many sieges and so many complete destructions of the city, is hardly possible. The same might be said of the house of Simon the Tanner. The Latin Hospice claims to stand on the site of Simon's house; but Mr. Guerin and other high authorities hold that its true site is near by an obscure mosque called the Mosque of the Bastion. It is situated near the Moon Pool, to the south of the city, and is "by the sea side," according to the description in the Acts of the Apostles (x : 6). It adds something to the probability that there

are now some small tanyards near by. Some years ago Capt. Guillemot discovered near the mosque some of the columns and capitals of a church which formerly stood on the spot where the mosque now stands and which was dedicated to St. Peter. The house, which is called the House of Simon, is comparatively modern, but is held in much veneration by the Mohammedans, who have a tradition that the Lord Isa (Jesus), while tarrying here, asked God for food, and that immediately a table was let down from heaven with the food He had desired. We have no reason to suppose that our Saviour was ever in Joppa; and the Mohammedan tradition is evidently a variation of the vision of St. Peter. In the court of this house there is a fig tree and a well; the doorway is simply an opening in the wall, without any wood-work whatever; the roof is flat and is surrounded with a parapet made of hollow earthenware pipes, inclined downward so as to allow a free circulation of air and at the same time permit the occupants of the roof to look down on what is going on below without themselves being seen. From the roof of Simon's house there is a fine view of the Moon Pool and the sea beyond.

We have not been long in the Holy Land, and yet what we have seen casts a gleam of light over many passages of Holy Scriptures. Let us spend a little time in looking over some of those passages.

A *city gate* is a new thing to us; but the cities of the Bible were walled cities with gates. Even the villages had gates for entrance, as they had walls for defence. The passage through the wall to which the gate gave access was a cool place in the heat of summer, and around the gate there was generally an open space, as there still

is at the principal gate of Jerusalem, where a sort of market was held. The narrow lanes and wynds which we have seen in Joppa are exactly like the streets of all ancient towns of Palestine, and the people must have been glad to escape from them into the pure air of the open space at the gate. So it naturally came about that when many of the people were to be gathered together, the gate was the usual place of meeting; and we read of the kings of Judah and Israel going out to the gate of Samaria and sitting there, each in his royal robes, to hear the words of the prophets (1 Kings xxii : 10). The gate was the customary resort of the elders of the city for consultation, and Job in his adversity recalls that when he had formerly gone to his place at the gate the young men had regarded him with reverence, the aged had stood up out of respect for him, the nobles had held their peace, and even princes had been silent (Job xxix : 7-9). For preaching and all sorts of publication the gate of the city was the usual place; indeed there was no other, unless some part of a street chanced to be unusually wide; so that Solomon in the Proverbs speaks of Wisdom crying at the openings of the gates (Prov. i : 21), and at the entry of the city (Prov. viii : 3). If witnesses were required to testify to a transaction they could be found at the gate, and therefore contracts were made there. When Boaz desired to meet the near kinsman of Ruth, who had not fulfilled his duty as a kinsman, he went to the gate and met him there, and then in the presence of witnesses he made the contract for his own marriage with Ruth (Ruth iv : 1-11). So too when Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah of the children of Heth for the place of a burying-ground, the sale



was confirmed to him in the presence of all that went in at the gate of the city (Gen. xxiii : 17, 18). Even treaties between tribes were made there, as in the case of the treacherous treaty recorded in the thirty-fourth chapter of Genesis. The gate, moreover, was the place where the hospitality of the inhabitants was offered to strangers, as when Lot sat in the gate of Sodom and offered hospitality to the two angels (Gen. xix : 1). At the gate likewise sat the judges of the city to administer public justice, as the language of the commandment implies, "Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes : and they shall judge the people with just judgment" (Deut. xvi : 18).

Israel was often and sorely punished because the poor in the gate were turned aside from their right by unjust judges, and the prophet Amos could promise no relief until the people should "hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate" (Amos v : 12, 15). The gate was also the place of execution, where the guilty were to be stoned to death (Deut. xxi : 19-21). In time of war the gate was thronged with those who wished to have the earliest reports. Eli was sitting at the gate when he received the fatal news that his sons were slain and that the ark of God was taken (1 Sam. iv : 17, 18). At the gate David awaited the result of Joab's battle with the rebellious Absalom (2 Sam. xviii : 24); from a part of the wall near to the gate the watchman saw the messengers approaching, and when David heard that his son was dead, he went up to a chamber over the gate and wept (2 Sam. xviii : 33).

In ancient eastern cities there were few public build-

ings, in many of them none at all; so that the gates of the city were a special object of pride. Beautiful gates were the glory of the citizens. Isaiah used significant as well as poetical language when he said, "Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise" (Isa. lx : 18). To cast contempt upon the gates of a city was to put all the citizens to shame, as Samson did when he carried off the gates of Gaza (Judges xvi : 3). It was a joy to the city when its gates were opened to receive a returning conqueror, and the Psalmist uses language which would go straight to the hearts of his hearers when he says, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in" (Psalms xxiv : 7).

Through the gate of the city we come into *the streets*; but the word street does not mean such streets as we are accustomed to see in European and American cities. In Hebrew the word *shuk* means a cleft, and there are clefts in the rock at Joppa to which the name of street could by no means be properly applied. Such dark places are the natural abodes of vice, and to such places Solomon refers in Proverbs vii : 8. But we must remember always that the streets of the Bible generally mean lanes of not more than a few feet in width, where it is often a matter of difficulty for beasts of burden to pass each other. "When wisdom cries aloud in the streets" (Prov. i : 20), it must be at some place where the position of the houses leaves a greater space than elsewhere.

We have observed the *lattice windows*, which can be used as outlooks over the streets. So they were used by the wise man who looked into the street through his casement (Prov. vii : 6); and long before the time of

Solomon we read that the mother of Sisera looked out at a window and cried through the lattice, "Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots?" (Judges v : 28.)

At the house of Simon the Tanner we have seen that the flat roof is surrounded with a *parapet*, as flat roofs ought to be. But among the Israelites it was not optional to build parapets, it was imperatively required by the law: "When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house if any man fall from thence" (Deut. xxii : 8). In the hot nights of summer the roof is the most agreeable sleeping place about the small, close houses of the East; in the day-time, too, it is frequented for many purposes, so that the wisdom, as well as the humanity, of the law of Moses is apparent.

We have noticed the *pottery* and mentioned its extreme fragility. It is, indeed, so extremely frail as to be broken by the slightest jar, and often merely in setting it down upon the ground. The least violence would break it into innumerable fragments; and when the Psalmist says of the heathen that God will break them in pieces, like a potter's vessel (Psalms ii : 9), he predicts their sudden and irremediable destruction. But if the eastern pottery is bad, it is cheap, and there was no great hardship in the Mosaic law, that a vessel into which any (ceremonially) unclean thing had fallen, was forthwith to be broken in pieces (Lev. xi : 33). A people like Israel was more likely to obey such a command than to comply with any rigorous directions for the cleansing of polluted vessels. Fragments of broken pottery may still have a certain utility, as for taking a coal of fire from

the hearth in an age and country where the convenience of friction matches was unknown; the larger fragments might even be used like saucers, for lifting water to the mouth to drink. When the prophet would suggest utter destruction, he says: "He shall break it as the breaking of the potter's vessel that is broken in pièces; he shall not spare; so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit" (Isa. xxx: 14). The potter's work is one of great dexterity. With a mass of clay in his hands, he sets his wheel revolving, and as the wheel turns, he moulds the clay into the required shape, so that the plastic material seems to obey his very thought. The image of the potter fashioning the clay is often used in Holy Scriptures, as in Isaiah, lxiv: 8: "But now, O Lord, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou our potter; and we are all the work of Thy hand." This figure of speech has been pushed to great extremes in controversy; but God's government is never to be asserted in such a way as to set aside the divine fatherhood, to which the prophet here refers as belonging to the very conception of divine government.

We have noticed the innumerable *dogs* which do the work of scavengers at Joppa, and we have observed that in the day hours they make no noise. The Prophet Isaiah (lvi: 10) compares the unfaithful prophets of Israel to lazy dogs: "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber." But if the dogs are silent during the day, they amply make up for it in the hours of the night, which they make hideous with their yelping, barking and howling. The Psalmist compares his cruel ene-

mies to dogs that "return at evening. They make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city; they belch with their mouth. Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied" (Psalms lix : 6, 15). Cowardly as they are in daylight, they are dangerous at night; so David says: "Dogs have compassed me! Save my darling from the power of the dog" (Psalms xxii : 16, 20). After sunset the dogs need no provocation to raise their voices; the sound of every footstep sets them off in a fresh outbreak of vociferous noise. It was a striking figure, therefore, which the Lord used when He declared to Moses that in the night which should strike terror into the hearts of the Egyptians, not a dog should move his tongue against any of the children of Israel, against man or beast (Exod. xi : 7).

The *birds* for sale in the bazaar may remind us of the love of orientals for feathered songsters, wild and tame. The bride in the Canticles (ii : 12) when speaking of the joyful coming of her beloved, as though he had brought the spring tide with him, says: "The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land." The Lord, reasoning with Job and showing the weakness of man, asks him: "Canst thou draw out Leviathan with a hook? Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?" (Job xli : 1, 5.) Doubtless the poor birds exposed for sale in the time of Jeremiah, as they are now, were not too carefully kept while awaiting a purchaser; and the unclean cage furnishes a biting simile to the indignant prophet: "As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit" (Jer. v : 27). The birds seem generally to have been taken with snares,

not robbed from the parent nest; and the snaring of birds is a familiar figure in the Old Testament. Thus Solomon says: "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird" (Prov. i:17).

The *chaffering and cheapening* which attends every sale in an oriental bazaar is just as Solomon observed thousands of years ago; the seller asking many times the value of his wares, and extolling their excellence in the loftiest and most solemn phrases, while the buyer declares that they are worth absolutely nothing; and each boasting afterward of his success in overreaching the other. The whole course of the transaction is pithily put in the observation of the wise man: "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth" (Prov. xx:14).

We may perhaps remark that one of the most touching of our Saviour's sayings may have had its immediate suggestion in the passing by of a *porter* bearing one of the enormous loads under which Eastern porters often stagger. If it were so, these words would be doubly significant: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi:28).

The woman whom we met with her face *tattooed* recalls to us the love of that unpleasant sort of ornamentation which existed in ancient times. Moses forbade it to be practiced by the Israelites (Lev. xix:28), but it seems that sacred marks were permitted to be made on the hands and forehead (Exod. xiii:9). In the Revelation of St. John we read of the *sealing* of the servants of God in their foreheads (Rev. vii:3), which certainly implies some sort of visible marking. But by far the most striking passage which borrows its poetic language from

this practice is in the prophecy of Isaiah where God says to Zion, "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me" (Isa. xlix : 16).

The beautiful *gardens* of the suburb of Joppa, each surrounded with its impenetrable hedge of prickly pear, remind us of the figure in which the Beloved one of the Song of Songs proclaims his joy in the thought that his bride is altogether his own. "A garden enclosed," he says, "is my sister, my spouse" (Cant. iv : 12). It is a beautiful simile, and as chaste as it is beautiful; and the rest of the same chapter abounds in references to springs, wells, fountains, gardens and the manifold fruits of orchards, such as would occur only to a poet to whom gardens were familiar.

The fruitfulness and beauty of the gardens of Joppa are due to constant *irrigation*, without which the light sandy soil would be sterile. The water is conveyed to them, as we have seen, in trenches, and then in smaller streams to every part of the soil. Water is the life of the garden, for the soil seems to need nothing but water to make it bloom with flowers and abound with fruit. How appropriate, then, is the promise of Jeremiah and Isaiah, "Their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all" (Jer. xxxi : 12; Isa. lviii : 11). The Psalmist likens the righteous man to "a tree planted by the rivers of water" bearing its fruit in due season, and never parched with drought (Psalms i : 3); but if we adopt the translation of the Westminster Version, which says *streams* instead of *rivers*, the image is still more striking. It refers to the fruit tree of the irrigated orchard to which the water is brought in

streams as it is needed, which is always protected from drought, and the fruitfulness of which is like that of trees in the *biarahs* of Joppa. There every tree receives the moisture it requires; a human providence cares for it as the divine providence watches over and cares for the course of all human events.

Men often act in self-will, and, as they think, wholly of themselves; but in that they are mistaken. God guides their doing more than they themselves do. Even of kings Solomon says, and in the gardens of Joppa we can realize the meaning of the figure, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord as the streams of water; He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Prov. xxi : 1).

No part of a garden dependent on irrigation can be neglected; the water must be made to reach it all, and where the larger streamlets are not sufficient to reach the plants, smaller channels are made through the sand with the foot of the laborer, so that all parts of the garden may be supplied. It is to this method of irrigation that reference is made in Deuteronomy where it is said that in Egypt "thou sowedst thy seed and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs" (Deut. xi : 10). In the greater part of Palestine no such irrigation was required.

The importance of *fruit trees* at the East is very great; fruit, indeed, forms no small part of the food of the people. For trees that bear no fruit there is little care or admiration; "every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down" and used for firewood (Matt. iii : 10; Luke iii : 9). Trees are known and judged by their fruits; as our Saviour says, "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" (Matt. vii : 15-20.) The Christian life is a fruitful life; Jesus says, "Herein is my Father glori-



fied, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John xv : 8); and the fruit of the Christian life, which St. Paul calls "the fruit of the Spirit" (or more properly, the "fruit of the *light*"), is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Gal. v : 22, 23).

Looking down from the gardens of Joppa to the westward, we cannot but think of the profound impression which the "great and wide sea," with its wealth of strange inhabitants, and with the ships sailing on its treacherous surface, made upon the ancient Hebrews (Psalms civ : 25, 26). The Israelites were not sailors, and the wonders of the deep impressed them with an awful admiration. It was among their sublime thoughts of the greatness of God that he has set to the sea his decree so that its waters may not pass his commandment (Prov. viii : 29); that he gathereth its waters in an heap (Psalms xxxiii : 7); and that, when storms arise, he stilleth the noise of their waves, as he stills the madness of the people (Psalms lxxv : 7). "The waves of the sea are mighty," says the Psalmist, "and rage horribly; but yet the Lord who dwelleth on high is mightier" (Psalms xciii : 4, Prayer Book Version). In the one hundred and seventh Psalm we have a hymn of the storm.

PSALM CVII : 23-31.

They that go down to the sea in ships,  
 That are occupied in business on the great waters,  
 These men see the works of the Lord;  
 They behold his wonders in the deep!  
 For He commandeth the stormy winds to rise;  
 He lifteth up the waves.

They mount up to the heavens;  
 They go down again to the depths;

Their soul is melted with the trouble,  
 They reel to and fro ;  
 They stagger like a drunken man ;  
 They are at their wits' end.

Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble,  
 And He delivereth them out of their distress.  
 He maketh the storm a calm,  
 So that the waves thereof are still,  
 Then are they glad because of the quiet,  
 And so He bringeth them unto the haven where they would be.

Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for His goodness,  
 And for His wonderful works among the children of men !

The aspect of the sea when tossed in a tempest and the triumphant but peaceful rolling of the waves in times of calm furnished the prophet with symbols of the lives of the wicked and the unrighteous. "The wicked," he said, "are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt" (Isa. lvii : 20). And in another place he says, "Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments ! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea" (Isa. xlvi : 18). To St. John in the lonely island of Patmos, where many of the visions of his apocalypse were perhaps suggested by the storms which raged during an eruption of a volcanic islet not far off, the sea was an object of dread. In the end of all the world's commotions he figures the all-pervading peace by the sublime phrase that there shall be "no more sea !" (Rev. xxi : 1.) "No more sea, except the sea of glass, like unto crystal, before the throne of God !" (Rev. iv : 6.)

A single morning spent in Joppa furnishes many illustrations of Holy Scripture. In our journeys through the

Holy Land it will not be necessary to apply what falls under our observation in quite so much detail. The examples just given are chiefly meant to show how much one may gather out of Holy Scripture with no other assistance than that of a good concordance.

## CHAPTER II.

### FROM JOPPA TO BETHLEHEM.

As the leading purpose of this book is to illustrate the life of our Saviour by describing the places in Palestine which He made sacred by His presence and ministry, the natural point at which to begin our survey would be Bethlehem, the place of His nativity. At Bethlehem, therefore, we shall make our real beginning; but it would hardly be possible to follow our Saviour's steps intelligently without some general conception of the physical characteristics of the country.

It takes nothing more than a glance at the map to discover that the Holy Land is naturally divided by its physical features into four sections, running generally north and south.

The first section includes the coast of Tyre and Sidon, a narrow strip of low land lying along the shore of the Mediterranean, and widening to the southward. It is not continuous, but is broken at three points into four divisions. Beyond Tyre, at the north, the first division is so narrow as not to appear at all, and about fifteen miles to the south of Tyre it is cut off by a bold spur of mountains, called the *Ladder of Tyre*, projecting into the sea. The second division of the plain opens to a width of three or four miles, and extends from the Ladder of Tyre to Mount Carmel. A third division, nowhere wider

than seven or eight miles, and extending from the foot of Carmel to a range of hills somewhat south of Joppa, is called the Plain of Sharon. The last division, which extends thirty-two miles southward, and varies in width from nine to sixteen miles, is the Plain of Philistia, or the Land of the Philistines. Beyond it, to the south, lies the wilderness of Shur.

The second section of the Holy Land is the mountainous region lying between the maritime plain and the Jordan. It is a branch of the Lebanon range, and is of an average height of from 2000 to 3000 feet, though some peaks are higher, and many are lower. The range is broken by the Plain of Esdraelon, extending from the base of Mount Carmel to within a mile or two of the Jordan, with the Nazareth hills and Mount Tabor to the north, and the Hills of Samaria and Mount Gilboa to the south. Just beyond the northern limit of this plain is Nazareth. The watershed of the mountain region drains westward into the Mediterranean, and eastward into the Jordan. As the map shows, the mountains are extremely irregular; the streams, too, are peculiar. Sir C. Warren, writing of the Plain of Philistia, says: "Philistia consists of an undulating plain, from 50 to 100 feet above the level of the sea. To the east of this the hills commence; not the hill country, but a series of low spurs and undulating ground, culminating in hogs' backs, running nearly north and south, and rising in places to 1200 feet above the ocean. To the east of these there is a steep descent of 500 feet or so, and to the east of these declivities again the hill country commences. In two or three miles we rise to altitudes of 1700 to 2000 feet—the backbone of the country being at an elevation of

2400 to 3000 feet. In the hill country the spurs, not more than a mile or so apart, are often separated by narrow ravines 1500 to 2000 feet deep, at the bottom of which, in the rainy season, rapid torrents roll. Follow them into the plain and see what becomes of them. . . . . The fact is, the bulk of the water reaches the ocean underground; on arriving at the plain, it forms marshes and pools, and quietly sinks away, while the bed of the stream itself, in the plain, is merely a narrow ditch, some six feet wide and four feet deep. You may leave the water at the commencement of the wady mouth, ride over the plain without seeing any of it, and meet it again welling out of the ground close to the sea shore, forming wide lagoons there. . . . . Now, if proper precautions were taken, were the people industrious, and the country cultivated and clothed again with trees, the water flowing in the ravines might be conducted over the plains in the early summer months, and induce the rich soil to yield a second crop." The fact here mentioned by Sir C. Warren, that the mountain torrents of Palestine reach the ocean underground, explains why water can always be found in the Plain of Sharon and the Plain of Philistia by digging only a few feet below the surface.

The third section of the Holy Land is the Jordan Valley, which begins at the sources of the Jordan, in the neighborhood of Banias, the ancient Cæsarea Philippi. The principal source is curious. It is not a spring, as that word is commonly understood; the water simply gushes from under accumulated stones near the mouth of a cave, and flows at once in a good sized stream, not over, but from under, a mill-dam, with no visible source beyond. Between Banias and Lake Huleh, or the

Waters of Merom, the Jordan descends nearly 1100 feet toward sea level, since Baniyas is 1080 and Lake Huleh is only seven feet above the level of the sea. At Lake Huleh the valley is four miles broad, and the surface of the lake is about four miles in length, but marshes, covered with the most extensive growth of papyrus which is known to exist anywhere, stretch for miles to the north of the lake. Between Lake Huleh and the Sea of Galilee the river plunges through a narrow gorge and rushes for nine out of eleven miles as a foaming torrent to the southern lake. Entering the Sea of Galilee on the north, the Jordan leaves it at the southern end, and thence descends to the Dead Sea, a distance of sixty-five miles as the crow flies, but the winding channel of the river is two hundred miles in length. Its course is always rapid, since the fall is very great, at some points not less than forty feet to the mile. Between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea the *Ghor*, or sunken valley of the Jordan, lies on both sides of the river, but is nowhere wide. Where the Plain of Esdraelon joins it, it is about eight miles wide. Twenty-five miles below the Sea of Galilee it is contracted to a width of two miles. Again it spreads to eight miles, and at the widest it forms the Plain of Jordan, properly so called, with an extreme width of fourteen miles.

The Dead Sea lies nearly 1300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, so that in its course from Baniyas the Jordan falls nearly 2500 feet. The Dead Sea, as we now call it, is called in Scripture the Salt Sea, and the Sea of Arabah, that is, the Sea of the Plain (Deut. iii : 17). By the Arabs it is called *Bahr Lut*, or Lot's Sea. As its surface is 1300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean,

and as it is in some places 1300 feet deep, its bottom is just about as much below sea level as Jerusalem is above it. On both sides it is surrounded by steep mountains. It has no outlet to the ocean; and indeed if any communication with the ocean existed, the water from the ocean would flow into the Dead Sea, and would flood what is now the Valley of the Jordan. Lying so low, and being on all sides surrounded with mountains, the heat is tropical and evaporation is rapid. As in other inland lakes having no outlet to the sea, the water is intensely salt, three pounds of it yielding one pound of solid salts. Much of this salt, however, is derived from the gradual washing down of great hills of rock salt, three hundred feet high, called *Jebel Usdum*, or the Mountain of Sodom, which lie at the south end of the Dead Sea, and cover an area of seven miles by three. From the bitumen which is still found on the shores and occasionally floating on the surface, the Dead Sea was sometimes called Lake Asphaltites. A large mine of bitumen exists at Hashbeya, at the head of the Jordan. There was a time, long before the earliest records of history, when the Dead Sea was 1400 feet higher than it is now. The whole Jordan Valley was then one great fresh-water lake, and was probably connected with a chain of lakes in eastern Africa. The process by which its level has been changed has left marks which are easily read and understood by the geologist.

The fourth and last section of the Holy Land is the mountain range and plateau lying beyond Jordan and spreading out to the eastward. It is a prolongation of the Anti-Lebanon range. From Hermon to the river Jabbock lies Bashan, including the Hauran, afterward



called Auranitis, beyond which lay Bozra or Bostra. Joining Bashan, and extending some twenty-five miles southward to Heshbon, lay Gilead, and beyond Heshbon, still to the south, lay the land of Moab. In the partition of the land among the tribes, Bashan, speaking roughly, fell to the lot of Manasseh; Gilead, from the southern line of the Sea of Galilee to the northern line of the Dead Sea, was apportioned to Gad; Moab to the River Arnon was the possession of Reuben; while the rest of Moab continued to belong to the original inhabitants. The eastern part of the Holy Land is of the greatest interest. Its condition of fertility is in striking contrast with the comparative desolation of the hill country on the western side of Jordan, and there can be no doubt that nearly the whole land was once as delightful and prolific as the country east of the Jordan still is. It is the wanton havoc of war, and especially the ruthless destruction of trees, that have produced the barrenness which is now so bleak and repulsive in the hill country west of the Jordan. In this connection the following extract from Canon Tristram will be read with interest.

“No one” (he says) “can fairly judge of Israel’s heritage who has not seen the luxuriant exuberance of Gilead, as well as the hard rocks of Judea, which can only yield their abundance to reward constant toil and care. To compare the two is to contrast nakedness and luxuriance. Yet the present state of Gilead is just what western Palestine was in the days of Abraham. Subsequently the Canaanites must have extensively cleared it. Even before the Conquest, and while the slopes and terraces were clad with olive groves, the amount of rainfall was not affected. The terraces have crumbled away; wars and

neglect have destroyed the groves until it would be difficult to find any two neighboring districts more strangely contrasted than the east and west of Jordan. But this is simply caused by the greater amount of rainfall on the east side, attracted by the forests, which have perished off the opposite hills. The area of drainage is about the same on each side. The ravines or wadys are numerous; but few of the streams are perennial on the west—*all* are so on the east. Every stream draining from Moab and Gilead is filled with fishes and fresh-water shells. I never found living fresh-water shells but in two streams on the west side. In other words, the brooks are now but winter torrents.”

After this cursory survey of the physical features of Palestine, we may next examine the roads which lead from Joppa to Bethlehem.

Before the construction of the railway two omnibuses ran daily to and from Jerusalem on what was called the modern road. Along the way are places of considerable interest, though they are by no means so majestic or romantic as those through which the traveller passes on the ancient road, which is to the north of the other, and at no point more distant from it than about six miles. We shall describe the modern road first, as it is nearest at all points to the railway.

A ride of a little more than three hours—thirteen miles—nearly in a straight line to the southwest of Joppa, brings us into full view of the *Tower of Ramleh*, the most prominent object in the Plain of Sharon. Ramleh has not been identified with any place mentioned in Scripture. There is indeed a mediæval tradition that it is the ancient *Ramathaim* or *Arimathæa*, the home of the “honorable

counsellor" who refused to take part in the "counsel and deed" of the murderers of Christ, and whose new tomb, near the wall of Jerusalem, was used as the sepulchre of the crucified Redeemer. St. Jerome says that Arimathæa was not far from Diospolis, or Lydda, and Ramleh is only about four miles south of Lydda; but *Rentiyeh*, which is seven miles north of Lydda, would answer that description nearly as well, and the name *Rentiyeh* is more likely than *Ramleh* to have been derived from the ancient *Ramathaim*. The name of Ramleh appears to be of Arabic origin, since the Arabic word *ramleh* signifies sand, and Ramleh is situated in a sandy plain. The Arabian historians tell us that it was founded by Suleiman, son of the Khalif Abd el Melik, early in the eighth century. Certain it is that Ramleh was a great and prosperous city before the date of the Crusades. It was probably as large as Jerusalem, or larger, and was surrounded by a wall with four principal gates and eight smaller gates. It was provided with an extensive system of water conduits and subterranean reservoirs. Christians lived at Ramleh, and had no less than four churches; but they had no bishop until the time of the Crusades, when a Bishopric of Lydda and Ramleh was established. After experiencing various fortunes during the Crusades, Ramleh had a long period of prosperity, but at length fell into comparative decay. It has now about 3000 inhabitants, of whom one-third are Christians of the Greek Church. The climate is mild and salubrious, more agreeable than that of Jerusalem and more healthy than that of Joppa. Like Joppa, Ramleh is surrounded with extensive and luxuriant orchards. The olive, the fig tree, the carob and the sycamore

abound, and the palm tree adds to the beauty of the landscape though it does not bear fruit. The land is amazingly fertile, and the fields devoted to agriculture are surrounded by dense hedges of gigantic cactus, in which a multitude of birds make their nests.

The approach to Ramleh is lovely, but a nearer view reveals less attractive features. Its lanes,—they can hardly be called streets,—are terribly crooked and are infested by an unlimited number of curs, which are hairless with mange. Here and there too are heaps of gray ashes deposited from the soap factories which have been in operation for many centuries. When the wind blows, the air is filled with fine particles of the pungent alkaline ash, which causes a general inflammation of the eyes of the inhabitants. It is believed that one-half of the male inhabitants of Ramleh are either totally blind or have some chronic disease of the eyes. The women, however, are more rigidly secluded and more closely veiled than in any other town in Palestine, and are consequently less affected by the prevalent malady.

On the east side of the town is the principal mosque, once the Christian Church of St. John, a large building one hundred and fifty feet long, by seventy feet broad. The interior consists of a nave and two aisles, with the principal and side apses, and with seven bays of clustered columns. Captain Conder pronounces this old Christian sanctuary, now perverted to Mohammedan worship, to be “the finest and best preserved church” he has seen in Palestine.

The most striking object in Ramleh is its famous White Tower, so called from its bright color. By Christians it is also called “the Tower of the Forty Martyrs,”

and by Mohammedans "the Tower of the Forty Champions." It doubtless once belonged to a Christian church, long since destroyed, though there are reasons for believing that it must have been constructed by Arab workmen from the designs of an European architect. The mosque which once stood by the tower probably replaced a Christian church of earlier date, and was surrounded by an enclosure of six hundred paces in circumference. Under the area thus formerly enclosed there are immense vaults, one of which is one hundred and fifty feet long, by forty wide and twenty-five deep. Its roof is supported by nine square columns. Christian tradition makes this vault the burying-place of Christian martyrs; according to Mohammedan tradition it is the sepulchre of forty Moslem heroes. It seems hardly likely that such a vault should have been made for such a purpose, but as it was not apparently meant for a cistern, and could hardly have been intended for a storehouse, the original purpose of its construction is quite obscure. The tower is twenty-five feet square at the base and rises to a height of about one hundred feet. It is ascended by a winding stair of one hundred and twenty-six steps, and the view from the top is the finest in all that part of the country. In the near foreground are the orchards, gardens and fertile fields of Ramleh. To the north and south stretches the Plain of Sharon. On the east are the mountains of Judea, with their ruggedness all softened in the distance. On the west the horizon is bounded by the silvery line of the Mediterranean. In all directions are towns or villages of more or less interest, and afar off, on a clear day, can be seen the height of Neby Samwil, which looks down upon Jerusalem. By common

consent the evening is the best time for this view, and Dr. Thomson, in "The Land and the Book," gives the following extract from his journal: "The view from the top of the tower is inexpressibly grand. The whole Plain of Sharon, from the mountains of Judea and Samaria to the sea, and from the foot of Carmel to the sandy deserts of Philistia, lies spread out like an illuminated map. Beautiful as vast, and diversified as beautiful, the eye is fascinated, and the imagination enchanted, especially when the last rays of the setting sun light up the white villages, which sit or hang upon the many-shaped declivities of the mountains. Then the lengthening shadows retreat over the plain and ascend the hillsides, while all below fades out of view under the misty and mellow haze of summer's twilight. The weary reapers return from their toil, the flocks come peacefully to their folds, and the solemn hush of Nature shutting up her manifold works and retiring to rest, all conspire to soothe the troubled heart into sympathetic repose. At such an hour I saw it once and again, and often lingered until the stars looked out from the deep sky, and the breezes of the evening shed soft dews on the feverish land. What a paradise was here when Solomon reigned in Jerusalem, and sung of the 'roses of Sharon!'"

Leaving Ramleh and following the direct road to Jerusalem, we come in two hours to El Kobab (commonly pronounced *Lobab*), which is mentioned in the Talmud, but not in Scripture; and about two miles southwest from El Kobab, is Tel Jezer, which has been positively ascertained to be the ancient Gezer, a city of the Canaanites whose king was overthrown and its inhabitants exterminated by Joshua (Josh. x : 33). Gezer, with its sub-

urbs, was allotted to the Levites, of the family of Kohath (Josh. xxi : 21), but other Canaanites took possession of it and held it down to the time of Solomon. They probably paid tribute to Israel, but they seem to have rebelled, for Gezer was taken by Pharaoh and burned to the ground, and its site was given to his daughter, who had become Solomon's wife. The city was immediately rebuilt by Solomon (1 Kings ix : 17), and its name does not again occur in the history of Israel until after the captivity. In the time of the Maccabees it was a place of importance. Its ruins are extensive, and all around it are quarries of basaltic rock and many rock tombs.

About three miles further along the road from El Kobab to Jerusalem is Latrun, a village of no consequence except on account of the tradition connected with it. Its name is supposed to be derived from the Latin *latro*, a thief, and situated as it is in a mountainous district, it may in ancient times have been infested by robbers. Hence arose the mediæval legend that Latrun was the home of the penitent thief, and perhaps of both the thieves who were crucified with Jesus.

Half a mile to the northwest of Latrun is Amwas, one of the places for which has been claimed the honor of being the Emmaus where the Saviour, on the evening of his resurrection, made himself known to two of his disciples in the breaking of bread (Luke xxiv : 13-35). The objection to Amwas as the Emmaus of the Gospel is its distance from Jerusalem ; for while the distance of Emmaus from Jerusalem is said by St. Luke to have been sixty furlongs (Luke xxiv : 13), the distance of Amwas is nearer one hundred and sixty. It has been suggested that the true reading of St. Luke may be one

hundred and sixty instead of sixty, and also that there may have been a mountain path which would greatly shorten the journey between the two places; but it cannot be said that either of the suggestions is entirely satisfactory. Other places to be mentioned hereafter may much more probably be identified with the sacred spot where the risen Saviour expounded to the two wandering disciples "all the scriptures concerning Himself" (Luke xxiv : 27). Amwas, however, is noteworthy on other accounts. It is mentioned as early as the times of the Maccabees (1 Macc. iii : 40), and after the time of Christ it received the name of Nicopolis (the City of Victory), in honor of the Roman triumphs. During the Christian period it was the see of a bishop. It has no antiquities of importance except the ruins of a church belonging to the fourth century.

Proceeding along the road to Jerusalem, after passing a well called *Bir Eyub* or Job's Well, and a convent called *Deir Eyub*, or Job's Monastery, we come at length to *Karyet el Enab*, the City of Grapes. Until recently this was believed, almost beyond all doubt, to be the ancient *Kirjath-jearim*, the City of Forests, one of the four cities of the Gibeonites, and known at a still earlier period as *Kirjath Baal*, the City of Baal (Josh. ix : 17; xviii : 14). *Kirjath-jearim* was emphatically a "high place," being 2360 feet above the level of the sea, and to its eminence doubtless was due the fact that it was one of the sanctuaries of Baal. Probably the reputation of sanctity continued to cling to it after the Israelitish conquest, and hence the request, made by the men of Bethshemesh to the men of *Kirjath-jearim*, to relieve them of the ark of the Lord, which had brought them so griev-



ous a misfortune. The ark of the covenant had been taken by the Philistines from the Israelites. One after another of the cities of Philistia had been visited with plagues, until the lords of the Philistines set the ark upon a cart, to which two milch kine were yoked, and the kine took the straight road to Beth-shemesh. There the Levites received the ark with due solemnity, but the people were guilty of an act of profane curiosity, for which they were visited with a fearful plague. Then they said: "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? and to whom shall He *go up* from us?" And they sent messengers to the men of Kirjath-jearim, saying: "The Philistines have brought again the ark of the Lord. *Come ye down and fetch it up* to you. And the men of Kirjath-jearim came and *fetches up* the ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill" (1 Sam. vi : 21 ; vii : 1), where it remained for twenty years. Dr. Robinson has no doubt that Karyet el Enab is the true site of the ancient Kirjath-jearim ; but Captain Conder, following a previous suggestion, concludes that the true site is at Khurbet Erma, on the line between Beth-shemesh and Rachel's tomb, near Bethlehem. Dr. Robinson is also of the opinion that Karyet el Enab was afterward called Emmaus, and that it is the Emmaus of St. Luke. In point of distance it has certainly the advantage of Amwas, but there is another site yet to be mentioned, which, even in this respect, has the advantage of Karyet.

The modern village of Karyet el Enab has one of the most perfect Christian ruins in all Palestine. It is an ancient church, formerly called the Church of the Prophet Jeremiah, on account of a mistaken belief that this place

was identical with *Anathoth*, the prophet's birthplace. This church has fared worse at the hands of the Arabs than most other sacred Christian edifices, since the custom of the Moslems has been to turn churches into mosques, while the Church of the Prophet Jeremiah was turned into a stable. It is now in the hands of the Latins, and will well repay a visit from the traveller.

Resuming the journey from Karyet, we come first to *Kastal*, the name of which shows it to have been a camp or fortress (*castellum*) of the Romans, and then to Kulonieh, formerly the site of a Roman colony (*colonia*), which has also been supposed to be the Emmaus of St. Luke. Kulonieh, however, is as much too near to Jerusalem as Amwas is too far off.

From Kulonieh to Jerusalem the distance is only about four miles, and the road has no point of Biblical importance. To reach Bethlehem, we have but to keep the broad road until we come to the Jaffa Gate, on the west side of the Holy City, and then to turn southward. As the more ancient route will bring us to the same point, we may now turn back and start again from Joppa along that route, and when we have again reached Jerusalem, we can examine the road thence to Bethlehem.

Starting again from Joppa toward Ludd, which is the first point of interest on our present route, we take the same road as to Ramleh for nearly four miles, until we come to the small Arab village of Yazur. A ride of two miles further brings us to Beit Dejan, a name which carries our thoughts back to the times of the conquest of Canaan, more than thirty-three centuries ago, and even to the time of Abraham (Gen. xxi : 32, 34 ; xxvi : 1, 8), three hundred years earlier ; for Beit Dejan is the mod-

ern Arabic form of *Beth Dagon*, the House of Dagon, and through all those ages this place has retained the name it received when it was a seat of the worship of the god of the Philistines. Besides the name, there is nothing to arrest our attention at Beit Dejan, and we keep on our way through a richly cultivated country. In half an hour we see the White Tower of Ramleh, about four miles to the south. To the north, at a distance of something more than five miles, is *Kefr Auna*, the village of Auna, or Ana, no doubt the ancient *Ono* (1 Chron. viii : 12), which at one time gave its name to the plain through which we are now journeying (Neh. vi : 2). Three miles northwest of Kefr Auna is Rentiyeh, which has been already mentioned as a conjectured site of Arimathæa. Between Kefr Auna and Rentiyeh, though not in a direct line, is El Yahudiveh, which Dr. Robinson supposes to be the *Jehud* of the Tribe of Dan (Josh. xix : 45). As we pass through this region and observe the numerous villages, we are prepared to understand how densely it was populated in ancient times. The surveyors of the Palestine Fund have sometimes discovered the remains of as many as three ancient towns within the space of two square miles ; and the unlimited fertility of the plain, which is produced by a rude system of irrigation, shows it to be capable of maintaining an enormous population. Through olive trees and rich gardens we approach Ludd, or *Lydda*, which is surrounded with fruitfulness on every side except the east, where the Judean hills rise close behind it.

Ludd was one of the first cities built by the Israelites in the Promised Land (1 Chron. viii : 12). It was then called *Lod*, and is frequently mentioned in connection

with *Ono*, *Hadid* and *Neballat*. *Ono*, as we have already seen, is a little over five miles north of *Ludd*. *Neballat* survives under the name of *Beit Nebala*, about three miles northeast of *Ludd*; and *Hadid*, about two and a half miles due east, under the name of *El Haditha*. *Hadid* furnishes another illustration of the tenacity with which names cling to places in the East; for *Hadid* was undoubtedly a city of the mysterious *Hittite* Empire, and its name comes from that of the children of *Heth*, who were a powerful people when *Abraham* was a wandering stranger in the Land of Promise. The name of *Lod* occurs several times in the Old Testament, but it is more famous in New Testament history as the *Lydda* to which *St. Peter* "came down" from the mountainous region of *Jerusalem* on the occasion of his visitation of the churches. Among "the saints which were at *Lydda*" he found a paralytic man called *Eneas*, whom he healed in the name of *Jesus Christ* (*Acts ix : 32-35*); and it was while he was at *Lydda* that the disciples in *Joppa* sent for him to comfort them in their affliction at the death of their beloved *Dorcas*. "As *Lydda* was nigh to *Joppa*," they thought he would not refuse to go to them. The apostle did not disappoint them. He quickly went the eleven miles which lay between the two cities and gave the mourners an undreamed of consolation when he presented *Dorcas* alive to the "saints and widows" to whom she was endeared by her charity (*Acts ix : 36-42*). Twenty years afterward another apostle, *St. Paul*, may have passed through *Lydda* when he was sent as a "prisoner of the Lord" to *Cæsarea* by the sea (*Acts xxiii : 17-35*); and only six years later, while the people of *Lydda* were nearly all absent at *Jerusalem*, celebrating the Feast of

Tabernacles, their city was ruthlessly burned to ashes by Cestius Gallus (A. D. 66). For a long time Lydda struggled for existence with little success, and it seems never to have recovered its former prosperity until it was rebuilt, perhaps in the time of the Emperor Hadrian, under the new name of *Diospolis*, the City of Jupiter. Under that heathen name it flourished; the Christian community increased; and at the great Council of Nicæa (A.D. 325), a bishop of Lydda, *Ætius Lyddensis*, was present. In the fifth century a famous church council was held in Lydda itself. In the lists of councils the name fluctuates between Lydda and *Diospolis*, but eventually the ancient name resumed the place usurped by its heathen rival. We need not trace the later history of Ludd through the era of the Crusades and afterward. Suffice it to say that its vicissitudes were almost as numerous and as tragic as those of Joppa.

At the present time, enclosed as it is with gardens and almost buried in palms and with a large well close to its chief entrance, Ludd is beautiful from a distance; but like Ramleh it is disappointing on a nearer approach. Its population is only about 1500, and the contrast of its present squalor with the prosperity it has in times past experienced is strikingly presented to the eye of the spectator by the remains of splendid buildings in the midst of miserable hovels. The aspect of the inhabitants is painfully displeasing, from the extraordinary number of persons who are affected with loathsome diseases of the eye caused by heaps of ashes, which have produced the same maladies as at Ramleh. It is a common saying that at Ludd every man has either but one eye or none at all.

The only attraction at Ludd, apart from its historical

associations, is the Church of St. George of Cappadocia, the patron saint of England, who is revered by all churches, but of whom hardly anything is certainly known. It is said that he was born at Lydda, and that, after his martyrdom at Nicomedia, his head was brought to his native place and deposited under the altar of the church which bears his name. The edifice has been many times destroyed, and as often rebuilt. It is now in possession of the Greeks, and under the altar is an ancient crypt which is said to have contained the tomb of St. George. The eastern part of the building is used as a church, the western part as a mosque, and the Mohammedans have a curious oral tradition of a prophecy of Mohammed, that, at the end of the world, the Lord Isa (Jesus) is to slay Antichrist at the gate of Lydda. Evidently this is a Moslem version of the legend of St. George and the Dragon.

Leaving Ludd through a rich meadow, we continue our way through olive groves and cactus hedges and approach the ascent of the Judean hills. In an hour we come to the village of Jimzu, the *Gimzo* of the Old Testament (2 Chron. xxviii : 18). From that point we rise by a rugged road, with a line of hills on either side, which gradually approach each other until they form almost a ravine. In a few hours we come to the village of *Beit Ur el tahta*, or the lower *Beth Horon*, at the lower end of the famous pass of Beth Horon, the scene of the most splendid victory in the history of Israel. From the lower Beth Horon, which is 1500 feet above sea-level, to *Beit Ur el foka*, or the upper Beth Horon, at the further end of the pass, the road is certainly steep, since it rises 600 feet in three miles, but it cannot be called precipi-

tous. Still less is it a ravine, for it runs along the ridge of a hogback or watershed with a *wady* (or valley) on either hand. On leaving the lower Beth Horon there is first a slight descent, and then a rise of about three miles to the upper village. Even in Palestine, this road is exceptionally difficult. In places it has steps cut in the rock, showing that at a former time it was artificially improved; but most of it is either over sheets of rock, smooth and flat as paving-stones, or over the upturned edges of the limestone strata, and it is everywhere strewn with the loose rectangular blocks of stone which are characteristic of the country. It is a bad road at best for the ordinary traveller; for an army in confusion a worse road could hardly be imagined.

Southeast of the upper Beit Ur is a deep valley, five miles wide, and beyond it, still to the southeast, the towering height of *El Jib*, the renowned fortress of Gibeon. In order to clearly understand Dean Stanley's eloquent account of the battle of Beth Horon, which is given below, it will be necessary to remember that an army fleeing from the valley before Gibeon, through the pass of Beth Horon, would have first to climb the steep slope of the valley in order to pass out at its upper end, and then would have to run down the pass in order to reach its exit at the lower end.

One other feature still requires to be described in order to completeness. Between the modern and the ancient roads from Joppa to Jerusalem, as far as Amwas on the former and Umm Rush on the other, lies a valley sloping gradually upward toward the east, and somewhat broken by hills. It is now called *Meri Ibn Omar*; and throughout its whole extent only one small village preserves the

famous name by which it was known in the days of Joshua. The village, three miles northeast of Latrun, is Yalo; the ancient name of the valley was Ajalon.

We are now prepared to recall the history of the battle of Beth Horon, which has been called, without exaggeration, the most important battle in sacred history. The Israelites had crossed the Jordan and entered the Promised Land. Their camp had been pitched at Gilgal, not far from Jordan, and there the headquarters of Joshua were kept for a considerable time. The fall of Jericho, quickly followed by the destruction of Ai, struck terror into the hearts of the men of Gibeon, who resolved to obtain a league with the invaders. Their messengers presented themselves before Joshua in worn garments and with other signs of travel from a distant country, and pretending that their land was far off, asked the alliance of Joshua and Israel. Without making inquiry, Joshua covenanted with the Gibeonites that their lives should be spared, and the elders of Israel bound themselves by an oath to observe the treaty. The treaty having been made, Joshua was chagrined to learn that these new allies occupied no distant region, but had their abode within one day's forced march from his own camp. Notwithstanding the false pretence under which his alliance had been obtained, he would not break the oath by which he and the elders of Israel had bound themselves; but he decided that the treaty must be construed strictly according to the letter of its terms. He therefore promised to spare the lives of the Gibeonites, and to protect them, but he declared that they should be hewers of wood and drawers of water to the congregation of Israel and the house of God forever.

The defection of the Gibeonites from the side of the



other inhabitants of the land was a severe blow to the enemies of Israel; for Gibeon was at the head of a league which included not only their own city and its territory, but also Kirjath-jearim, of which we have already spoken, Beeroth, of which we shall hear later on and in another connection, and also Chephira, the modern village of Kefir, two miles west of Yalo. Therefore the neighboring kings, having heard of the covenant between Israel and the Gibeonites, entered into a confederacy to destroy Gibeon. Then the Gibeonites appealed to Joshua to come to their assistance. Here we may begin our extract from Dean Stanley.

“This summons” (he says) “was as urgent as words can describe. It was a struggle for life and death for which his aid was demanded—not only for Gibeon, but for the Israelites. They had hitherto only encountered the outskirts of the Canaanitish tribes. Now they were to meet the whole force of the hills of Southern Palestine. ‘The King of Jerusalem, the King of Hebron, the King of Jarmuth, the King of Lachish, the King of Eglon’—two of them the rulers of the chief cities of the whole country—‘gathered themselves together, and went up, they and all their hosts, and camped before Gibeon; and the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly and save us and help us; for all the kings of the Amorites, that dwell in the mountains, are gathered together against us’ (Josh. ix : 1–6).

“Not a moment was to be lost. As in the battle of Marathon, everything depended on the suddenness of the blow which should break in pieces the hostile confederation. On the former occasion of Joshua’s visit to Gibeon

it had been a three days' journey from Gilgal, as according to the slow pace of Eastern armies and caravans it well might be. But now, by a forced march, 'Joshua came unto them suddenly and went up from Gilgal all night.' When the sun rose behind him he was already in the open ground at the foot of the heights of Gibeon, where the kings were encamped. As often before and after so now, 'not a man could stand before' the awe and the panic of the sudden sound of that terrible shout—the sudden appearance of that undaunted host, who came with the assurance not 'to fear nor to be dismayed—but to be strong and of a good courage, for the Lord had delivered their enemies into their hands' (Josh. x : 8, 25). They fled down the western pass, and 'the Lord discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that *goeth up* to Beth Horon' (Josh. x : 10). This was the first stage of the flight—in the long ascent which I have described, from Gibeon up to Beth Horon the Upper. 'And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the *going down* of Beth-Horon, that the Lord cast great stones from Heaven upon them unto Azekah' (Josh. x : 11). This was the second stage of the flight. The fugitives had outstripped the pursuers, they had crossed the high ridge of Beth Horon the upper; they were now in full flight down the descent to Beth Horon the nether; when, as afterward in the flight of Sisera before Barak, one of the fearful tempests, which, from time to time, sweep over the hills of Palestine, burst upon the disordered army, and 'there were more which died with hailstones than they whom the Children of Israel slew with the sword' (Josh. x : 11).

“It is at this point that ‘the Book of Jasher’ presents us with that sublime picture, which, however variously it always has been and perhaps always will be interpreted, we may here take as we find it there expressed. On the summit of the pass—looking far down the deep descent of all the westward valleys, with the broad green vale of Ajalon unfolding in the distance into the open plain, with the yet wider expanse of the Mediterranean Sea beyond—stood the Israelite chief. Below him was rushing down in wild confusion the Amorite host. Around him were ‘all his people of war and all his mighty men of valor.’ Behind him were the hills which hid Gibeon—the now rescued Gibeon—from his sight. But the sun stood high above those hills—‘in the midst of Heaven,’ for the day had now far advanced since he had emerged from his night march through the passes of Ai; and in front, over the western vale of Ajalon, was the faint figure of the crescent moon, visible above the hailstorm, which was fast driving up from the sea in the valleys below. Was the enemy to escape in safety, or was the speed with which Joshua had ‘come quickly and saved and helped’ his defenceless allies, to be still rewarded, before the close of that day, by a signal and decisive victory?”

“Doubtless, with outstretched hand and spear, ‘the hand that he drew not back, when he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed the inhabitants of Ai,’ ‘then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel:

Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon ;  
And thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies.

“So ended the second stage of the fight. The third is less distinct, from a variation in the text of the narrative. But following what seems the most probable reading, the pursuit still continued; ‘and the Lord smote them to Azekah and unto Makkedah, and these five kings fled and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah.’ But Joshua halted not when he was told; the same speed was still required, the victory was not yet won. ‘Roll great stones,’ he said, ‘upon the mouth of the cave, and set men by it for to keep them; and stay ye not, but pursue after your enemies and smite the hindmost of them; suffer them not to enter into their cities; for the Lord hath delivered them into your hands.’ We know not precisely the position of Makkedah, but it must have been probably at the point where the mountains sink into the plain that this last struggle took place; and thither at last to the camp at Makkedah ‘all the people of Israel returned in peace; none moved his tongue against any of the people of Israel.’ There was enacted, as it would seem, the last act of the same eventful day; the five kings were brought out and slain, and hanged on five trees until the evening when at last that memorable sun went down. ‘It came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, that Joshua commanded, and they took them down from off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave’s mouth. . . . And that day Joshua took Makkedah, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof he utterly destroyed, them and all the souls that were therein; he let none remain’ (Josh.

x : 22-28). And then followed the rapid succession of victory and extermination which swept the whole of southern Palestine into the hands of Israel. The possession of every place, sacred for them and for all future ages, from the Plain of Esdraelon to the southern desert—Shechem, Shiloh, Gibeon, Bethlehem, Hebron—was, with the one exception of Jerusalem, involved in the issue of that conflict. ‘And all those kings and their land did Joshua take *at one time*, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel. And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp to Gilgal’” (Josh. x : 42, 43).

The fame of Beth Horon does not end with this marvellous victory. It was at this same pass that the heroic Judas Maccabeus gained one of his first successes, against the Syrian oppressors under whose yoke his country had fallen. In comparison with the triumph of Joshua it was a small affair, but it was the beginning of a wonderful career and a great deliverance. In this case the advancing enemy, while on the march to attack Judas, was caught between the two Beth Horons. Even so, the handful of men with Judas hesitated to attack so formidable an army; but Judas bade them remember that “the victory of battle standeth not in the multitude of an host.” Inspired by his address they rushed down upon the Syrians and drove them back in wild disorder. From the “going down of Beth Horon” to the plain they pursued their routed enemy, slaying eight hundred of them, “and the residue fled into the land of the Philistines” (1 Macc. iii : 13-24).

Like a spark from an expiring brand, a third Jewish victory at Beth Horon preceded the extinction of the national existence of Israel. When the Roman general

Cestius had finished the cowardly destruction of Lydda, already mentioned, he too marched against Jerusalem through the pass of Beth Horon, and encamped before Gibeon. Seized with ungovernable fury, the Jews forgot even the sanctity of their Sabbath and hastened to meet their invader. Bursting upon the Roman camp they made their way clean through it, and the Romans fled down the pass while their cavalry defended the rear. Once in the pass the cavalry was at fearful disadvantage, and the Roman loss was heavy; but night came on, and there was no Joshua at hand to obtain a lengthening of the day. The main body of the enemy escaped; and the insane divisions of the Jews soon made their victory, such as it was, of no effect.

*El-Jib*, beyond all doubt whatever is the ancient *Gibeon*. The plain in which it stands is all seamed with streamlets, or at least with water courses, which ultimately drain westward into the Mediterranean Sea, and not into the Jordan. The ancient fortress has disappeared; the city has shrunk to a poor village. In a cave hollowed out under a cliff is a copious spring which fills one deep reservoir on the spot and another below the village. This lower reservoir is the "pool of Gibeon" besides whose waters a bloody conflict once took place. It was after the death of Saul and David's coronation at Hebron. Abner had proclaimed Saul's son Ish-bosheth king, and, as it seems, he made some appointment with Joab, the follower of David, to meet at the pool of Gibeon. The two parties "sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side;" and after what conference we know not, twelve men of either party rose and fought a mortal duel in which all the champions

were slain. A fierce battle ensued, ending in a victory for Joab. In honor of that day's battle the "place was called *Helkath-hazzurim*," the field of the Mighty, "which is in Gibeon" (2 Sam. ii : 12-18). Not far from that same spot Joab afterward committed his cowardly assassination of Amasa, whom David had sent to quell the revolt of Sheba (2 Sam. xx : 1-13). Soon after that cowardly murder the tabernacle of God was removed, either from Kirjath-jearim or from Nob (1 Chron. xvi : 39), to a "high place" near by Gibeon; and on the death of David, who had never forgiven the crimes of Joab, that doomed old man, knowing that the hour of vengeance had come, fled to the tabernacle and was put to death while he held the very horns of the altar (1 Kings ii : 28, 29).

The reign of Solomon was inaugurated with a magnificent religious celebration at the tabernacle near Gibeon. It was a fit spot for such a service. If we may suppose the "high place" to have been the hill-top within a mile of the fortress of Gibeon, and now known as *Neby Samwil*, in honor of the Prophet Samuel, then no such spot in all his kingdom could have been found for the purposes of that act of devotion in behalf of himself and his kingdom. It is 3006 feet above sea-level, and towers above all other hills in its vicinity. From the top of a Moslem minaret, which now stands on its summit, is the most extensive view in Western Palestine. "At our feet," says Dr. Tristram, "are deep, rugged valleys, partially covered with scrub, and olive groves contrasting with the white limestone ridges. Beyond are Beeroth and Ophrah, the rock Rimmon, and Ramah of Benjamin. Over the nearer ridges we look far away, beyond the Jordan Valley, which lies far too deep to be seen, on to

the dark outlines of the ranges of Gilead and Moab. With the glass we can detect the fortress of Kerak, Jebel Shihan (Sihon), the highest point in Moab. Turning to the south, over the bare foreground of grey hills we see the mosques and domes of Jerusalem apparently sunk in a valley. Northward we detect Mount Gerizim and the shoulder of Carmel; to the westward push forth—from beneath the wide Plains of Sharon and Philistia, sometimes green with corn, sometimes bare and red fallow, and dark patches which tell of olive groves, while white spots gleam in the sunshine—the roofs of Lydda, of Ramleh, or some other olive and orange girt village. Beyond these a ribbon of yellow sand marks the line between the green plain and the blue sea. That white green-encircled knoll at the edge of the sand is Jaffa, and the sail of a lateen-rigged vessel here and there dots the sea. If this be not Mizpeh, *i.e.* the ‘watch-tower,’ of Benjamin, I know not where else we can find it, although the name be lost under a mediæval tradition, and that again supplanted by a Moslem one.”

At the tabernacle, which stood on this magnificent platform with the heavens for its appropriate dome, Solomon offered his oblation of a thousand burnt offerings and sought counsel from God concerning the work before him. The youthful prince was richly blessed. “In Gibeon God appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.” Awed perhaps by the spectacle on which he had gazed, the king was moved with humility. He asked only for “an understanding heart to judge the people;” and God gave him what he asked and many rich blessings which he had not asked (1 Kings, iii : 1–15.) “This glimpse of Gibeon



in all the splendor of its greatest prosperity—the smoke of the thousand animals rising from the venerable altar on the commanding height of ‘the great high place’—the clang of ‘trumpets and cymbals and musical instruments of God’ (1 Chron. xvi : 42) resounding through the valleys far and near—is virtually the last we hear of it. In a few years the temple of God at Jerusalem was completed, and the tabernacle was taken down and removed.”

That is indeed “the last we hear” of Gibeon, unless Gibeon is to be understood to include the adjacent height of Neby Samwil. If that is understood, and if Neby Samwil can also be identified with the ancient Mizpeh, then we have more to hear of it. On the former point we need only say that no other place in the vicinity of Gibeon can be so properly called its “great high place” as the crest of Neby Samwil; and on the latter point, without entering into one of the most difficult questions in biblical geography, we may be content to know that Dr. Robinson and Van de Velde are satisfied that Neby Samwil is Mizpeh. Dr. Tristram, as we have above seen, says, “if this be not Mizpeh, I know not where else we can find it.”

During the twenty years that “the ark of God abode at Kirjath-jearim, the Israelites forsook the idolatries into which they had fallen,” and at the invitation of Samuel, the prophet, they assembled at Mizpeh to renew their homage to the Lord. Samuel did not hesitate to promise that if they did so sincerely they should be delivered out of the hands of their enemies. While they were engaged in their solemn devotions, the lords of the Philistines came against them with their army; but, as in the first battle of Beth Horon, a sudden storm of hail burst upon

them and beat them back; the Israelites took courage and fell upon their enemies and routed them. Then it was that Samuel raised a stone of victory and called it *Eben-ezer, the Stone of Help*, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us!" (1 Sam. vii : 1-12).

It was at Mizpeh again that all Israel assembled to choose a king, and there that the gallant but unhappy Saul, who "was higher than any of the people from the shoulders upward," was hailed as the leader of his people, and the heights of Mizpeh rang again and again with the new cry, "God save the king!" Then the aged Samuel laid aside his duties as the judge of Israel, going no more on his judicial circuit to Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpeh (1 Sam. vii : 16).

Except that the men of Mizpeh faithfully did their part in the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the captivity (Neh. iii : 7), and that Judas Maccabeus encamped there on the eve of his rescue of the Holy City from the Syrians, we have no further notice of Mizpeh by that name; but it was a place beloved long ages afterward by the crusaders, who called it Mount Joy, because there they first came in sight of Jerusalem. There it was that the English Richard of the Lion Heart had his only sight of the Sacred City. His troops were encamped in the Valley of Ajalon. A well near Yalo is still called *Bir-el-Khebir*, the Hero's Well. Richard alone went up to Mount Joy, but standing with his face toward Jerusalem, he hid his eyes behind his shield and cried, "Ah, Lord God, I pray that I may never see thy Holy City, if so be that I may not rescue it from the hands of thine enemies!"

Tradition makes Neby Samwil the birth-place, the

home and the place of burial of the Prophet Samuel. The crusaders held it to be the ancient Shiloh and built a church there over "Samuel's Tomb." The village is poor. Its few inhabited dwellings are partly hewn in the rock, but there are remains of ancient buildings of great solidity.

From Neby Samwil we descend by the ancient Roman road, and strike the road from Kulonieh, on the west side of Jerusalem. As our present destination is not Jerusalem but Bethlehem, we continue our journey southward through the Valley of Gibeon. Leaving the city behind, our course turns slightly to the west and leads us into the *Valley of Rephaim*, which the authorized version renders as the *Valley of Giants* (Josh. xv : 8 ; xviii : 16). There (2 Sam. v : 18-22 ; xxiii : 13), David won two victories against the Philistines, of so signal a character as to cause the name of the valley to be changed to that of *Perazim* (Divisions). This name clung to it and was so proverbial as a symbol of utter rout that the Prophet Isaiah uses it to describe the desolation and destruction of the whole earth :

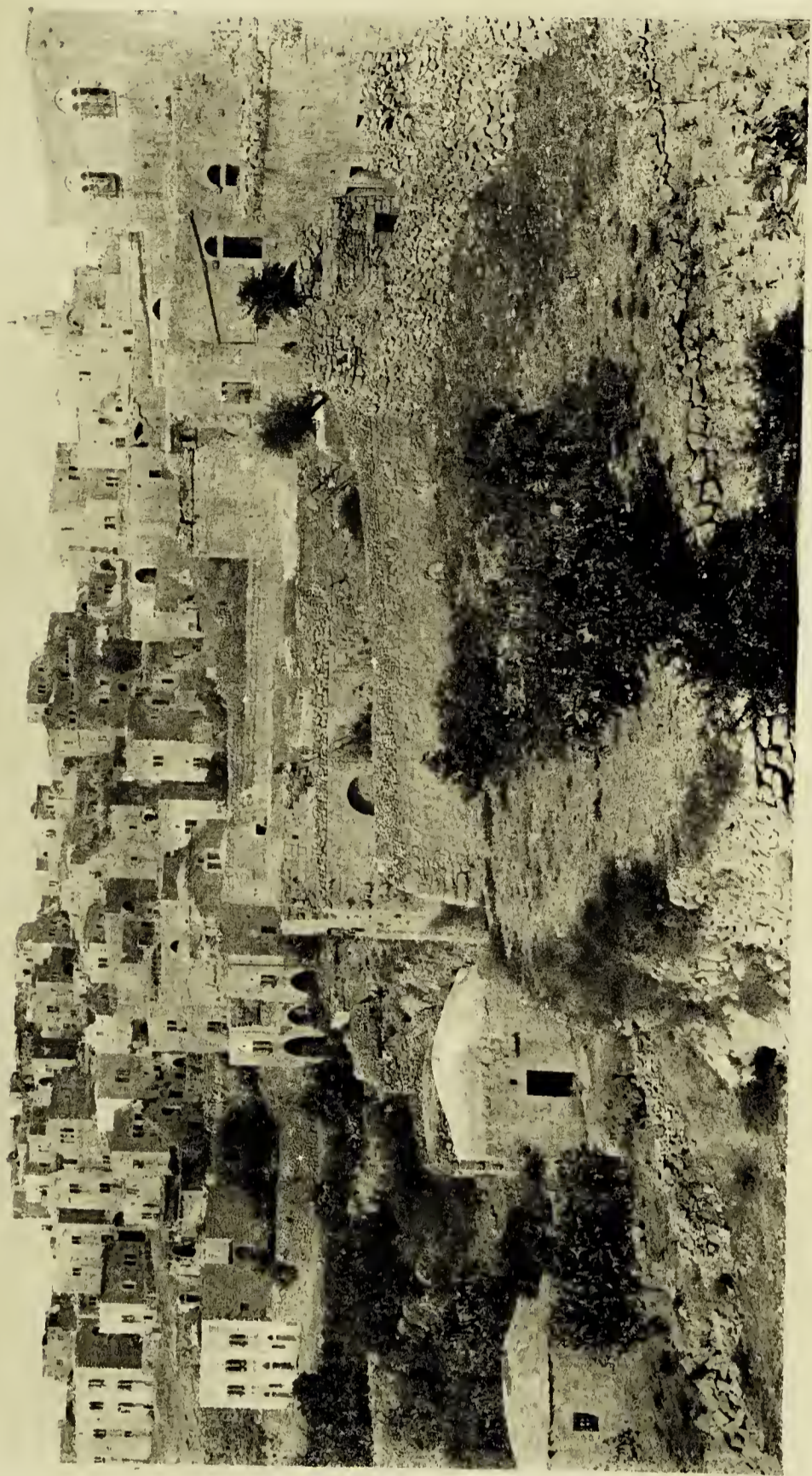
"Jehovah shall rise up as at Mount Perazim,  
He shall be wroth as in the Valley of Gibeon." (Isa. xxviii : 21).

The plain is now tolerably cultivated. It sinks somewhat to the west toward the *Wady el Werd*, or the *Valley of Roses* ; and as we proceed we pass some spots which tradition connects with sacred incidents and Scripture characters, such as a ruin on the right, called *Katamon*, which is said to have been the house of Simeon (Luke ii : 25), and the well of the Wise Men, where the Magi are said to have caught sight of the Star again after leav-

ing Herod. At the end of the plain we pass the residence of the Greek Patriarch and ascend a hill, on the summit of which, three miles from Jerusalem, is Deir Mar Elyas, or the Convent of St. Elijah. It was founded in early Christian times by a bishop of the name of Elias, and tradition soon connected the place with the Prophet Elijah. The mark of the prophet's foot is still shown in the rock! On the path from the main road to the monastery there is a well from which the Holy Family is said to have drank.

Little more than a mile beyond Deir Mar Elyas, while we are still something less than a mile from Bethlehem, we come to a monument of undoubted antiquity. It is Rachel's Tomb.

Bethlehem is so ancient a city that no record of its origin survives. It was a city in the days of the patriarchs; it was not far from Bethlehem, on the way to Jerusalem, that Jacob buried the wife of his first choice, the beautiful Rachel. "Rachel died," we are told in the simple language of Scripture, "and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave; that is a pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day" (Gen. xxxv : 19, 20). From this passage we may infer that the original Canaanitish name of Bethlehem was *Ephrath*, or *Ephratah*, and that the name of *Beth-lehem*, the House of Bread, was still of recent date in the time of Jacob. The present name, *Beit Lahm*, signifies House of Flesh. It is not to be supposed that the pillar or monument of stones which Jacob raised in honor of Rachel would remain unmoved forever, but there is every reason to believe that the veneration of the Jews for so ancient a monument of their race would cause





them, from time to time, to renew or replace it when it fell into decay. As the centuries went on, and the associations of race became traditions of religion, the tomb of Rachel would be more and more visited and venerated; and the strength of national and religious sentiment would be too great ever to allow its site to be forgotten. Traditions of place are preserved at the East with great care, and there is little doubt that what is now known as Rachel's Tomb is either at or very near the spot on which Jacob reared his pillar of commemoration. Throughout the Christian era there has been no difference in the tradition of Jews, Christians and Mahommedans, by all of whom Rachel's Tomb is sacredly revered. The present building, of course, is not the tower or mound of stones with which Jacob marked the spot. It cannot date further back than the twelfth century. It is a square building of rough stones, the walls of which are about twenty-three feet in length, and about twenty feet high, with a dome at one end, which rises above the flat roof of the rest of the edifice. Originally there seem to have been arches in each wall. All over the walls are seen the names of children who have wished to leave a record of their visit to the spot.

There is but one difficulty connected with the place of Rachel's Tomb, namely, that it is said (1 Sam. x : 2) to have been in "the border of Benjamin," which would require it to be at some distance to the north of Jerusalem, instead of nearly five miles to the south. On the other hand Jacob says, "when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when there was but a little way to come to Ephrath; and I buried her in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem" (Gen. xlviii : 7). Dr.

Thomson explains the apparent discrepancy as follows: "It seems to me that instead of running northward, and thereby throwing a large part of the site of Jerusalem into the tribe of Judah instead of Benjamin, the boundary line appears to have made a deep bend southward, so as to include Rachel's Tomb, which Samuel says was 'in the border of Benjamin.' The border, it is true, must have returned sharply from the tomb to the northwest, forming a kind of loop made for the special purpose of including the sepulchre within the tribe of Benjamin. Nor is it difficult to understand and appreciate the motive which led to this unique curve in the boundary. The Benjaminites would naturally desire to possess the spot where the father of their tribe was born, as the soul of his mother was departing, and whose solitary sepulchre commemorates the affecting incidents of that sad calamity."

It is touching to remember that, though Jacob piously did honor to the wife for whom he had waited fourteen years, he was not buried by her side. In the near prospect of death his heart turned tenderly to the blear-eyed Leah (Gen. xxix : 17), whom he had not desired for his wife, and to whom he had perhaps not shown too much love in the early years of their marriage. When the time came for the aged patriarch to be gathered to his fathers, it was not by the side of Rachel that he chose to be laid, his solemn and affecting charge being, "Bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron, the Hittite, for a possession of a burying-place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah"



(Gen. xlix : 29-31). Even in those days of polygamy something in human nature testified to the true nature of marriage, the exclusive union of one man with one woman "according to God's holy ordinance" at the creation; and though Jacob had had Rachel to wife as well as Leah, yet at the last his heart turned to the wife of his youth.

## CHAPTER III.

### BETHLEHEM.

IF any place on earth ought to be sacred to the hearts of men, that place is Bethlehem. From that little town of Judah has gone forth a power which has affected the whole course of the world's history, and which is destined to affect the course and history of all worlds in the universe, so long as time endures. It was in that little town that "the Power of God and the Wisdom of God" assumed the veil of our humanity. It was in Bethlehem that He was born Whom prophets had foretold, and at whose coming choirs of angels sang aloud for joy, Jesus, the Christ, the Prince of Peace, the Saviour of mankind.

Bethlehem, as we have before said, is a city so ancient that there is neither record nor tradition of its origin. Of its history before and during the patriarchal period we know nothing. After the conquest of Canaan it is first mentioned in connection with the story of a sin.

Bethlehem was not a city of the priests, but it is certain that, after the conquest, some priests, or at least Levites, made their home there. The northern tribes, though always more prone to idolatrous rites than Judah and Benjamin, cherished a high regard for the priestly tribe of Levi. So it came to pass in the days when there was no king in Israel, and when every man did what was right in his own eyes, that a man named Micah

eagerly secured the services of a Levite of Bethlehem, to serve as a priest in his house and conduct his idolatrous worship (Judges xvii). Thus Jonathan, a Levite of Bethlehem, became priest of the tribe of Dan, and his descendants after him retained the same office until the kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the people were carried into captivity (Judges xviii: 30). But for that sin of Jonathan the Levite, the idolatry of Dan might not have become fixed and inveterate; and perhaps the ruin of a kingdom might have been averted.

The next notice of Bethlehem is in the beautiful idyl of the Book of Ruth. In the age to which that lovely story belongs, Bethlehem was much the same as it is now. Things change slowly in eastern lands, cities hardly change at all; and besides, the physical situation of Bethlehem would make any great change impossible. Then, as now, it was situated on a sort of triangular wedge of high rock, opening from the highlands of the west to the plains toward the east, and consisting of two continuous hills, of which the western is the higher. On the north and south the sides of the hills are exceedingly steep, but the lower hill slopes eastward to the plain. Then, as now, the sides of the hills were terraced, so as to give place for orchards of olive trees and other fruits; and these terrace gardens yielded a rich increase to laborious cultivation. In the plains beneath, and especially to the eastward, were fields of grain and rich pasturage for flocks. From the town on the summit of the hills could be seen the valley which declines toward the shores of the Dead Sea, and beyond the sea rose the gloomy hills of Moab, purple in the distance. There came a famine over all that portion of the land;

the orchards cast their fruit, the fields yielded but a scanty harvest, the poor suffered for bread; and Elimelech, with his wife Naomi, was driven by want to leave his native home in Bethlehem, and to seek a livelihood beyond the Salt Sea in the land of Moab. There they dwelt until the two sons of Elimelech had grown up and had married maidens of Moab; and then the father and his sons died, leaving three widows behind them unprovided for and unprotected. Naomi heard that the Lord had blessed her own people with plenty, and she resolved to go back to her native home. She did not ask nor expect her sons' wives to go with her. She hoped that they might find in Moab other husbands, and a future happier than the past had been. However, the two young women chose to go with her; but as they went—three widows on foot, and with small possessions among them—Orpah was persuaded to return. She kissed Naomi and went back, while Ruth refused her mother's urgent entreaty in words which art has wedded to the strains of an immortal melody. She said: "Entreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." There was nothing more to say between those two, for Ruth's purpose was as immovable as a fixed star, and "when Naomi saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her;" and so they came, God guiding them, to Bethlehem the House of Bread. They were still in straits for means of living. The inheritance

of Elimelech and his sons had fallen to a distant kinsman, whose duty, by the law of Moses and the custom of the time, was to take Ruth to wife. Naomi supposed the wealthy Boaz to be her next kinsman, and sent Ruth gleaning in his fields, doubtless to the eastward of the Bethlehem hills. Boaz bade his reapers treat the stranger kindly, and told them to allow her to glean after them among the sheaves, and even to let handfuls fall for her to gather. Ruth herself he told to abide with his maidens, and at their modest meals he gave her of the parched corn and vinegar which was served out for the rest. At last the harvest was followed by the winnowing of the grain in the threshing floor, and by Naomi's counsel Ruth's claim was made known, in a truly oriental fashion, to her kinsman Boaz. But he was not her nearest kinsman as she had supposed, and could not be her husband unless the nearer kinsman would renounce his right; so Boaz met the nearest kinsman at the gate of Bethlehem, the matter was publicly arranged with the consent of all parties, and Ruth, the Rose of Moab (for Ruth is near akin to our English word *Rose*), became the wife of the good-hearted but elderly man who had been kind to her in her poverty. Children blessed their union. It was not long before the women of Bethlehem said, "There is a child born to Naomi;" "and they called his name Obed; he is the father of Jesse, the father of David." Thus the Moabitish maiden became the mother of many kings, and, what is more than that, an ancestress of Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

It is altogether likely that Ruth may have held Jesse, the father of David, in her arms, as Naomi held his grand-

father Obed ; and if Boaz had no other children, then the father of David would inherit some considerable portion of the fields of Boaz in which Ruth went gleaning among the reapers. But if we are to believe the Talmud story that Ibzan the Bethlehemite, who judged Israel for seven years after Jephthah and who had thirty sons and thirty daughters (Judges xii), was none other than Boaz, the husband of Ruth, the portion of Jesse could not be a large one. Jesse appears, however, to have been a man of some substance, or he would hardly have been numbered among the elders of Bethlehem (Sam. xvi : 1-5). Besides, David seems to have given some land in the vicinity of Bethlehem to Chimham, the son of Barzillai, which was afterward known as "the Habitation of Chimham" (2 Sam. xix : 37, 38 ; Jer. xli : 17), and if he did, it was probably a part of his inheritance from Jesse. Moreover, Jesse is always mentioned with a certain marked respect, as if descent from him were a distinction. David is constantly spoken of as "the son of Jesse," and even the Saviour is called the "Root of Jesse," and "a Rod out of the stock of Jesse" (Isa. xi : 1-10).

When the Spirit of the Lord had deserted the unhappy Saul, the Prophet Samuel was sent to Bethlehem to anoint a king for Israel. At a sacrificial feast, at which the elders were present, and to which Jesse was particularly invited, seven of his sons were successively rejected ; but when David, the youngest of all, was brought in, the prophet beheld in him the "man after God's own heart," who should reign over God's people (1 Sam. xvi). Still, the lad, though designated to so high an office, continued to keep his father's flock in the Plains of Bethlehem,

tending his teeming ewes, perhaps, in the same field where the shepherds long afterward heard the glad tidings of the birth of David's greater Son, the Christ (1 Sam. xvii : 15 ; Psalms, lxxviii : 70, 71). When he became a member of Saul's household, he still returned to share in the family feasts of his father's house (1 Sam. xx : 6), and some of his bravest companions and fellow soldiers, of later times, were Bethlehemites, as the three brothers, Joab and Abishai and the unfortunate Asahel, "light of foot as a wild roe," whom they buried "in the sepulchre of his father, which was at Bethlehem" (2 Sam. ii : 18, 32). When David had become a war-worn outlaw under the persecution of Saul, and when he at last succeeded to the throne of a kingdom which was overrun by its enemies, he seems often to have recalled the peaceful days and simple pleasures of his early years. The Psalms are full of references to the occupations of his youth, and the twenty-third psalm, which has given hope and comfort to many thousands of hearts, is a pastoral lyric of the flock and the wilderness. When he was in hiding near the Cave of Adullam, Bethlehem was occupied by the Philistines; and one day, suffering from thirst, he incautiously said in the hearing of three of his mighty men, "Oh, that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" Forthwith, the three heroes made their way to Bethlehem, braved the hostile garrison, drew water from the well beside the gate, and brought it to their chief. But David would not drink the water which might have cost brave men's lives. He said, "Far be it from me, Lord, that I should do this! Is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?" The "well of David" is still at Bethlehem.

Wells are precious things in that dry land; they are seldom forgotten, never destroyed except by enemies in war. There are two wells which claim the honor of David's name, but the claim of one of them is much stronger than that of the other. Dr. Geikie, after saying that there are five shafts sunk into the rock (although he himself saw only three), adds that "the largest of the three openings proved to be twenty-six feet deep, but it is partly filled with stones, so that the original depth cannot be known. Between two and three feet of water stood in the bottom; but the other openings, which were about twelve feet, were dry. The water in the first pit was fresh and good, like that of a spring, and it is probable that it flows from one, though most of the water seems to find some escape through the rocks. In David's time it may have risen much higher in the shaft. Situated in the only spot where 'a gate' could have been built—the north end of the town, which alone joins the country without an intervening valley—this well seems fairly entitled to be regarded as that from which the precious draught was brought to the shepherd king. It is, by the way, the only spring in Bethlehem, the town depending entirely on cisterns."

For a long time Bethlehem had the happiness of places that have no history. For centuries we hear nothing of it whatever. Rehoboam fortified it and so made it liable to military attack (2 Chron. xi : 6). Many of its inhabitants must have been carried into captivity at Babylon, since we read that not less than one hundred and twenty-three Bethlehemites, by which we are to understand heads of families, returned from captivity with Zerubabel (Ezra ii : 21). Yet Bethlehem, though not famous,



was not forgotten; it was a city of prophecy. It was not great in the history of Israel, but it was to be illustrious among the cities of the world. So said the Prophet Micah: "But thou, Bethlehem-Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah v: 2).

At a little distance from Bethlehem is Migdal Eder, "the Tower of Eder" (Gen. xxxv: 21), or "the tower of the flock" (Mic. iv: 8; v: 2), from which the shepherds watched for enemies by whom their flocks might be assailed. Its place is now occupied by a neglected chapel, called "the Angel to the Shepherds." It consists only of a rude crypt or cave in a grove of olive trees; but why it should be so neglected is difficult to guess, since by unvarying tradition it is the spot at which the shepherds on the Plain of Bethlehem heard the angelic proclamation of the good tidings of the birth of Christ.

During the governorship of Cyrenius (Quirinus) over the province of Syria, Joseph and the Blessed Virgin had been required by an edict of the Emperor Augustus Cæsar to go to the place to which by descent they belonged, to be enrolled in a general census. Nazareth was within the limits of that province, and it may have been a concession or courtesy which arranged that persons belonging by birth or descent to the kingdom of Herod should be enrolled in his dominions. Be that as it may, toward the middle of winter the holy pair went down from Nazareth to Bethlehem, a distance of eighty miles, to the city of their forefathers.

Joseph was undoubtedly of the line of David, and

both the genealogies of our Lord, which are given in the Gospels, are genealogies of Joseph. That Mary also was of the royal race is clearly implied in the New Testament (Luke i : 32 ; Acts ii : 30 ; xiii : 23 ; Rom. i : 3). Thus Mary and Joseph were at least distantly related, and it has been conjectured that they may have been cousins, so that the genealogy of Joseph may really be the genealogy of Mary likewise. The sacred care with which the Jews have always kept the record of their genealogies has not only been of interest, but has been of great historical value. A few years since a Jew of New York, resenting the social ostracism of his people, asserted in the public press that he could trace his descent in a direct line from King David, and also from Aaron, the brother of Moses. It may well be, then, that Joseph, knowing that the Child to be born was of the line of David, and cherishing the hope that He might prove to be the long-expected Messiah, chose to be enrolled at Bethlehem, where the Messiah was to be born, rather than at Nazareth.

Humbly enough, nevertheless, we may be sure, Joseph and Mary approached the city of their fathers ; and when they came there, they discovered that the khan or caravanserai, which St. Luke calls "the inn," was already full of guests. The inn, at best, would be a poor place of abode. It would simply be a square building of one story, consisting of little rooms, or cells, surrounding a court-yard, in which the cattle were sheltered. These rooms, or cells, would be entirely closed on three sides, and entirely open on the side facing the court. The flooring would be raised somewhat above the court, but they would be quite unfurnished, and absolutely without

privacy. Their occupants would be left without attendance; they must draw their own water and prepare their own provisions, and might rest on such mats or carpets as they brought with them.

Even such poor entertainment was denied the parents of Christ; "there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke ii : 7). It is not unusual, in many parts of Palestine, for caves to be used as stables; indeed, there are khans which are simply caves; and nothing is more common than for families to occupy a room or rooms immediately adjoining a stable. In some such cave-stable, according to the universal tradition of Christendom, Joseph and Mary were obliged to take refuge. St. Justin, the martyr, born at Shechem and one of the earliest of Christian fathers, says that Jesus was born in a cave at Bethlehem; and the saintly Jerome, moved by a deep spirit of piety, spent many years of his long life of learned usefulness (from A. D. 386 to 420) at Bethlehem and in a cave near that of the Nativity.

If the record of the birth of Christ given by St. Luke is brief and simple, not such are the stories with which popular imagination soon decked the wondrous tale. The apocryphal gospels are full of strange marvels. One of these early tales it may be worth while to give entire. It is as follows :

"It chanced, as Mary and Joseph were going up toward Bethlehem, that the time came when Jesus should be born; and Mary said to Joseph, 'Take me down from the ass;' and he took her down and said to her, 'Where shall I take thee, for there is no inn here?' Then he found a cave near the grave of Rachel, the wife of the Patriarch Jacob, the mother of Joseph and Benjamin,

and light never entered the cave, but it was always filled with darkness. And the sun was then just going down. Into this cave he led her, and left his two sons beside her, and went out toward Bethlehem to seek help. But when Mary entered the cave it was presently filled with light, and beams, as if from the sun, shone around; and so it continued, day and night, while she remained there. In this cave the Child was born, and the angels were round Him at His birth, and worshiped the New Born, and said, 'Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, and good-will to men.'

"Meanwhile, Joseph was wandering about, seeking help; and when he looked up to heaven, he saw that the pole of the heavens stood still, and the birds of the air stopped in the midst of their flight, and the sky was darkened. And looking on the earth he saw a dish full of food prepared, and workmen resting round it, with their hands on the dish, to eat; and those who were stretching out their hands did not take any food; and those who were lifting their hands to their mouths did not do so; but the faces of all were turned upward. And he saw sheep which were being driven along, and the sheep stood still; and the shepherd lifted his hand to strike them, but his hand remained uplifted. And he came to a spring, and saw the goats with their mouths touching the water; but they did not drink; they were under a spell; for all things at that moment were turned from their course." (Protevangeli-um C. 17-20.)

Long ages afterward, devout imagination loved to dream that physical nature recognized the time of Christ's birth every year. Thus Shakespeare says :

“Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes,  
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,  
The bird of dawning singeth all night long ;  
And then, they say, no spirit can walk abroad ;  
The nights are wholesome ; then no planets strike ;  
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm ;  
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.”

On Christmas eve, in the olden time, it was believed that for an hour the bees awoke from their winter sleep and hummed their hymn of praise ; that the cattle at midnight knelt in their stalls ; and that the sheep in their folds formed a procession in honor of the birth of Christ. These pretty fancies were unfounded, but at least they were poetical, and they were certainly devout. Only tender hearts, musing that such things ought to be, could have come to dream that they must be, and so at last to believe that they actually happened. And yet the simple story of St. Luke is more majestic than these pretty dreams.

On the eighth day after his birth, the young child was circumcised according to the law of Moses. St. Luke is content to mention the fact without comment ; and we need not dwell upon it further than to say that by his circumcision he was acknowledged to have been “made under the law,” as the apostle says (Gal. iv : 4). It was at his circumcision that, according to the usual custom of the time, he received the name which he was to wear and to adorn throughout his earthly life. It was then that “his name was called JESUS, which was so called of the angel before He was conceived in the womb” (Luke ii : 21). Jesus is a Greek form of the Hebrew name *Hoshea*, which means *Salvation*, or of *Joshua*, which signifies *Whose salvation is Jehovah*. It is a common name in the Old Testa-

ment, and it was hardly less common in the time of Christ. Josephus alone mentions no less than twelve persons of that name, and we find it several times in the New Testament. The full name of the robber who was preferred to the Saviour (Matt. xxvii: 16) was probably *Jesus Barabbas*; in Luke iii: 29 we find the same name in the form of *Jose*; in Acts xiii: 6 we read of a Jew called *Bar-Jesus*, and in Col. iv: 11, of *Jesus Justus*. In Acts vii: 45, and Heb. iv: 8, the Joshua of the Old Testament is mentioned by the Greek equivalent, *Jesus*. By its historical association with the victorious commander, Joshua, *Jesus* was a fit name to be borne by the Saviour of the world; and probably it was none the less fit, because it was too common to attract attention. To many millions of men it has come to be the sweetest and most precious of all names, giving strength to the weary, hope to the faint-hearted, and faith to the faltering. It is the name by which men and women have lived lives of holy heroism, and which countless thousands have fondly breathed with their last breath. So it will be while time shall last, and in the world to come it will still be the alpha and the omega, the first and last and tenderest of all the names in heaven.

After the circumcision the parents of *Jesus* still tarried at Bethlehem; and on the fortieth day after His birth, the Blessed Virgin went, according to the law, to celebrate her purification. The offering of a woman after child-birth was required to be a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a turtle dove or a pigeon for a sin offering, but those who were not wealthy might bring two turtle doves or two young pigeons and not a lamb (Lev. xii: 1-8). A money offering was also required

when the child was the first-born of his mother (Num. xviii : 16). Joseph and Mary brought the offering of the poor (Luke ii : 22-24).

We shall not here describe the Temple to which they went, and there was no protracted ceremony which requires description. But an incident occurred as they were entering the Temple which cannot be omitted. As they passed into the courts of the sanctuary, they were met by an old man of Jerusalem, called Simeon, who was gifted with unusual spiritual privileges. Holy and devout in life, he was one of those who waited for the coming of the Christ; and in some way it had been revealed to him that he should not die until he had seen Christ. Moved by a spiritual intuition he entered the Temple just as Joseph and Mary had arrived, and instantly the old man knew that he was in the presence of his Lord. Taking the young Child in his arms, he exclaimed (Luke ii : 29-32):

“ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word ;

For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people ;

A Light to lighten the gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.”

Having seen the Saviour, Simeon sang his *Nunc dimittis* with a glad and thankful heart; and we perceive that, even under the law, he had a heart prepared for a Saviour of the whole world, when we find him praising God, not only for the coming glory of Israel, but also for a light that was to lighten the gentiles. Simeon shared the spirit of the prophet who had said, “ The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them

hath the light shined" (Isa. ix : 2). But the prophetic eye of Simeon saw, moreover, that the light of Christ should be made to shine through darkness and many sorrows ; he foretold that through him there should be falling, as well as rising again, to many in Israel ; and with pitying sympathy, we may not doubt, he warned the Virgin Mother of the sword that should pierce her heart also (Luke ii : 35). Hardly had his words of prophecy been uttered when another aged saint came in with confirmation of their truth (Luke ii : 36-38). Anna, too, was a prophetess, and we may suppose that Simeon and Anna accompanied Joseph and Mary to their humble sacrifice.

Once more, having performed their duty as faithful Israelites, they retraced their steps to Bethlehem, passing on their way the Tomb of Rachel. It was now almost six weeks since the birth of Jesus, but how much longer they remained in Bethlehem we have no means of learning. We know, however, that before two years, and possibly much sooner, they were compelled to leave, perhaps forever, the little town which thenceforth for them, and for mankind at large, had become the noliest city of the world.

While these events were happening, Jerusalem was groaning under the cruel and capricious hand of Herod. That monarch was not even an Israelite, though he was descended from Esau, through his father, Antipater, who was an Idumean, and from Ishmael through his mother, Cypros, who was an Arabian. When the Sanhedrin had boldly told him that he could not be the rightful sovereign of Israel, his reply had been to put the offending elders to the sword. Herod was a Greek in life, an



Oriental in revenge, a Roman in allegiance and policy. His rule was maintained only by the authority of Rome, and his personal safety was secured only by the presence of his mercenary guards. In a conspiracy, not long before the birth of Christ, thousands of the Pharisees had been ruthlessly slaughtered, and the streets of Jerusalem had run with blood. Old, savage, suspicious, Herod well knew that the advent of a rightful heir of David would be hailed with joy by the Jews. No one knew better than the crafty Idumean that under the guise of outward submission there lay a seething mass of outraged nationality and bitter hatred of himself.

We may conceive the tumult of excitement which would be raised both in the people and in Herod by the sudden arrival in Jerusalem of "Wise Men," or Magian astrologers, from the East, saying that they had seen the star of a King of the Jews, and had come to pay their homage to him. From what part of the further East these mysterious persons came is not known. They may have been Parsees—that is, Persian followers of Zoroaster—or they may have come from Babylon, where astrology was a sacred profession, without which no important public business could be undertaken. At Babylon the Magians were divided into recognized classes (Dan. ii : 2 ; iv : 7), under a chief who was known as the Rab-Mag (Jer. xxxix : 3). That the Wise Men of St. Matthew's Gospel came from Babylon, however, is a mere conjecture, like other beautiful and fanciful conjectures and traditions which have been gathered in great numbers round their story. The Prophet Isaiah said of the Messiah, "The gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising;" therefore it has been

supposed that these Wise Men were persons of royal dignity in their own lands; and the gifts which they brought to offer to the new-born King of Israel have been supposed to be the presents which the Psalmist said should be brought by the Kings of Tarshish and the Isles of Sheba and Seba (Psalms lxxii : 10). An early tradition counted no less than twelve of these royal Wise Men, but in later centuries the number was reduced to three, whose names, extraction and personal appearance the Venerable Bede has told with much particularity. Melchior, according to Bede, was an aged man of the race of Shem, with gray hair and a flowing white beard; Caspar, of the race of Ham, was a ruddy and beardless youth; Balthasar, a son of Japhet, was of middle age, noble in bearing and swarthy of countenance. In their persons, therefore, these three represented all the descendants of Noah and all the ages of human life. Their gifts were symbolic of the dignity of him whom they approached. Melchior gave gold as if in tribute to a king; Caspar offered incense to the Son of God; Balthasar brought myrrh for the burial of the Lamb.

From very early times it was believed that the position of the stars at the moment of a man's birth affected the whole course of his life, and so gave a prediction of the fortunes that should attend him. This belief was by no means confined to the heathen; the Jews also shared it; the Talmud says, "The planets give wisdom and riches; the life and portion of children hang not on righteousness, but on their star." The study of astrology was so esteemed as to become peculiarly the study of the rabbis; "the calculation of the stars," says *Pirke Aboth*, "is the joy of the rabbi." The same superstition lingered long

in Christendom. Even our own Shakespeare alludes to it in comparatively recent times. Thus :

“When beggars die there are no comets seen ;  
The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.”  
—*Jul. Cæsar*, 11 : 2.

And again :

“Comets portending chance of time and states,  
Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky,  
And with them scourge the bad revolting stars  
That have consented unto Henry’s death.”—*Henry VI*, 1 : 1.

The prophecies of the Messiah were often connected with the mention of stars and heavenly light, as in the sublime prediction of Balaam, “I shall see Him, but not now : I shall behold Him, but not nigh ; there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel ; out of Jacob shall come He that is to have dominion” (Num. xxiv : 17–19). By the rabbis it was said that when the Christ should appear a star should rise in the east, shining in great brightness, and having seven other stars fighting against it on every side. One hundred and thirty years after Christ an unfortunate impostor, who professed to be Christ, took to himself the name of Bar-Cochba, or Son of a Star ; so closely was the idea of starry influences and revelations connected with the Messianic hopes of the Jews. Moreover, there are good reasons for believing that about that very time of our Saviour’s birth, there actually were conjunctions of the planets which were so unusual and so remarkable that they must have attracted great attention among all astrologers. Archdeacon Farrar says : “On December 27, 1603, there occurred a conjunction of the two largest superior planets, Saturn and Jupiter, in the zodiacal line of the fishes, in the watery trigon. In the following spring they

were joined in the fiery trigon by Mars, and in September, 1604, there appeared in the foot of Ophiuchus, and between Mars and Saturn, a new star of the first magnitude, which, after shining for a whole year, gradually waned in March, 1606, and finally disappeared. Brunowski, the pupil of Kepler, who first noticed it, describes it as sparkling with an interchange of colors, like a diamond, and as not being in any way nebulous or offering any analogy to a comet. These remarkable phenomena attracted the attention of the great Kepler, who, from his acquaintance with astrology, knew the immense importance which such a conjunction would have had in the eyes of the Magi, and wished to discover whether any such conjunction had taken place about the period of our Lord's birth. Now, there is a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the same trigon about every twenty years; but in every two hundred years they pass into another trigon, and are not conjoined in the same trigon again—after passing through the entire zodiac—till after the lapse of 794 years, 4 months and 19 days. By calculating backward, Kepler discovered that the same conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, in Pisces, had happened no less than three times in the year of Rome 747, and that the planet Mars had joined them in the spring of 748; and the general fact that there was such a combination at this period has been verified by a number of independent investigators, and does not seem to admit of a denial.

“The appearance and disappearance of new stars is a phenomenon by no means so rare as to admit of any possible doubt. We should have strong and strange confirmation of our main fact in St. Matthew's narrative,

if any reliance could be placed on the assertion that, in the astronomical tables of the Chinese, a record has been preserved that a new star did appear at this very epoch."

At the East such a phenomenon would surely receive a Messianic interpretation, for at the East, as we learn from Tacitus and Suetonius, there existed an ancient and immovable conviction that a new empire was fated to arise, having its beginning in Judea, and ultimately destined to overspread the world. We may imagine, then, the consternation of Herod, and the excitement of the Jews, when the mysterious strangers came asking, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His Star in the east and have come to worship Him" (Matt. ii : 2). In answer to Herod the priests and scribes unhesitatingly affirmed that the Christ, whose star the Wise Men had undoubtedly seen, was to be born in Bethlehem, according to the saying of the prophet (Micah v : 2). Herod thereupon made close inquiry of the Wise Men, of the precise time at which the star had been first seen, and dismissed them to Bethlehem to search for the new-born and dangerous Child, saying that he also desired to do Him honor. The Wise Men departed from Jerusalem. The way to Bethlehem was not long; and as they went their hearts were gladdened at the sight of the prophetic star rising before them and preceding them until it rested over the house (probably not the cave stable of the Nativity) where the young Child now was. There they paid Him their adoration and presented their symbolic gifts; but on receiving an angelic warning, they did not return to Herod, but departed to their distant country by another way (Matt. ii : 3-12). Joseph also received a heavenly warning to

escape from Bethlehem, and so to save the Holy Child from Herod's vengeance, and at once, in haste, without an hour's delay, he quitted Bethlehem by night, and set out for the distant land of Egypt (Matt. ii : 13, 14).

When the savage monarch saw that he had been outwitted by the Wise Men, he made short work of it. Sending out his soldiers, he caused every child of two years old or less, in Bethlehem and its neighborhood, to be put to death, so as to be quite sure that the Child announced by the Star of the East should not escape. Ages before, the prophet had foretold the lamentations of the mothers of Bethlehem over their slaughtered infants. In poetic language he represented their wailing to have been heard in a village of Ramah, which no longer exists, but which then stood near Rachel's tomb, and Rachel herself to have taken up the cry of lamentation for her murdered little ones. That is the meaning of the prophecy, "In Ramah was a voice heard, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel, weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they are not" (Jer. xxxi : 15; Matt. ii : 18). It takes nothing from the application of this prophecy that it referred at first to the carrying away of Israel into the captivity; but it adds something to its pathos to remember that the Jews constantly thought of Rachel as continuing in her grave to weep at the sorrows of her descendants. Thus the Talmud says, "When the children of Israel were driven in chains to Babylon by the soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar, their road led past the tomb of our mother Rachel; and as they came near the tomb they heard cries and bitter weeping. It was the voice of Rachel." But while the mothers of Bethlehem were weeping over their children, Joseph and

Mary were bearing the Child of Promise to a place of safety in a strange land.

The pilgrim who visits Bethlehem now, sees much such a city as that in which the Lord was born. It has about eight thousand inhabitants, most of whom are Christians, the Mohammedans having been driven out in a riot in 1831, and their quarter of the town having been destroyed in 1834 by the order of Ibrahim Pasha. The chief industry of the inhabitants of Bethlehem is the manufacture of mother-of-pearl and olive-wood crosses, chaplets and rosaries, such as pilgrims from all lands love to bear away with them from Bethlehem. The beauty of the women is renowned, and their virtue is as celebrated as their beauty.

The female dress of the women of Bethlehem is peculiar. As Dr. Geikie says, "Maidens wear a light frame upon the head, covered with a long white linen or cotton veil which falls over the shoulders to the elbows. They have ear-rings; and over the front of the head, showing some of the hair below it and just under the veil, is a diadem of silver or silver-gilt with a band of ornaments of the same material loosely fastened to it at both ends. Their black hair hangs on their shoulders in heavy plaits just seen beneath the veil, which always leaves the face exposed, for are they not Christians? Their chief, or indeed it may be their only, garment is a long blue or striped gown, generally of cotton, loosely tied at the waist, with open sleeves hanging down to the knee like those of a surplice. Its front above the waist is always set off more or less with red, yellow or green patches of cloth, embroidered to the wearer's taste. Over this gown, however, the well-to-do are fond of wearing a bright red

short-sleeved jacket, reaching in some cases to the knees. Matrons have a somewhat different head-dress, the veil resting on the top of a round brimless felt hat much like that of a Greek priest, and having its front ornamented in most cases with coins. All their earrings and strings of coins glitter round their necks, hanging at times down to the breast. The whole fortune of a maiden or matron alike is often sewed on a head-dress, or hung round her neck, and not a few women have been murdered in past days for the sake of the wealth thus changed, in the strictest sense, into vanity. The men, though Christians, generally wear the turban; not a few however having only the red Turkish fez; a striped, wide-sleeved dressing-gown of bright-colored cotton being thrown over the white or colored under-shirt."

The houses of Bethlehem are flat-roofed of course, and are built of yellow stone. The filth in the streets is as repulsive as in other eastern cities. Water indeed is almost a luxury, for the only supply is obtained from cisterns. If David's well at the gate was a spring, as we have reason to believe, it has either ceased to flow freely or the stream escapes through the rock underground. The terraced orchards and gardens still hang on the steep sides of the hills on which Bethlehem stands; the neighboring plains are still plains of shepherds, who watch their flocks by night as of old, wrapped in their sheepskin coats; in the eastward plain are still the lands that once belonged to Boaz and Jesse; and beyond the shimmering waters of the Dead Sea still rise the frowning purple mountains of Moab.

But to Christian eyes the great Church of St. Mary, which marks the place of Christ's nativity, surpasses all



else. It is a grand building, grand and simple; grand because of the simplicity which attests its antiquity, surrounded by fortress-like convents of Greek, Latin and Armenian Christians, who beside the cradle of their Lord exhibit the spectacle of their divisions. This venerable building appears to be the very church reared by the Emperor Constantine in 330. In 1010 it is said to have miraculously escaped destruction by the Moslems, so that the Franks, whose aid had been invoked by the Christians of Bethlehem, found on going to their succor that the church was all uninjured. On Christmas day, 1101, Baldwin was crowned King of Jerusalem in this same church, and in 1110 Bethlehem was made an episcopal see with this church as its cathedral. After many repairs and restorations it remains substantially the same edifice, and is therefore one of the very oldest monuments of Christian architecture in the world. It is now in the joint possession of the Greeks, Latins and Armenians. The Greek baptismal font has a touching inscription: "A Memorial before God, for the Forgiveness of those whom the Lord Knows." Under the church is the cave of the Nativity. Its dimensions are forty by sixteen feet; its height is only ten feet. It is lighted by huge candles standing in enormous candlesticks. Within the cave is the Shrine of the Nativity, lighted, day and night, by fifteen lamps; and in the centre of its floor a single silver star bears the inscription, "Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus Natus est"—"*Here of the Virgin Mary Jesus Christ was born!*"

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

OF the particulars of the flight of the Holy Family from Bethlehem to Egypt, in their haste to escape the murderous scheme of Herod, we have no account in the gospels; yet we know its direction, and it is possible to imagine some of its incidents and to trace its course.

Their journey must of course have been to the southward, and their first halt would be made at the ancient city of Hebron which is about seventeen miles southeast of Jerusalem and only twelve miles from Bethlehem. This would be their most direct route, and besides it would bring them to the home of their kinsfolk, of the family of Zachariah and Elizabeth. It is extremely probable that Hebron was the usual home of Zachariah, for it was a city of the priests and was in "the hill country of Judah," Hebron being 3500 feet above the level of the sea. There or at Juttah, which is five or six miles to the southeast of Hebron, the family of the Baptist lived; and if at Hebron, then the greatest of the Prophets, and the Christ of whom he was the forerunner, probably met as infants of two years old or less at this time. We may willingly assume that they met at Hebron, for Hebron is one of the most interesting and important places in sacred history. It is one of the most ancient cities in the whole world. We learn (Num. xiii : 22) that

it was built seven years earlier than Zoan in Egypt, a city which has for ages lain in ruins, and which is even now yielding to the search of scientific men many strong confirmations of the historic truth of certain parts of the sacred record. When we first hear of Hebron it was a chief city of the great nation or confederation of the Hittites, or children of Heth. At the time when God promised (Gen. xv : 20) to give the land to the seed of Abraham, the Hittites were a great power, having one capital at Kadesh, another called Carchemish on the Euphrates, and a third at Hebron. At the time of the birth of Moses they were defeated by Thothmes III. of Egypt; and Ramesis II., who was the Pharaoh of the oppression, is said in an ancient monument to "have broken the back of the Hittites for ever and ever." When Abraham went into the land of the children of Heth, they were still in undisputed possession, and the father of the people which was to possess it after them was obliged to purchase from them a place in which to bury his dead. Hebron was then called Mamre (Gen. xiii : 18), and also Kirjath-Arba (Gen. xxiii : 2), or the city of Arba (Josh. xxi : 11), from Arba, father of Anak, by whom it may have been founded. Thither Abraham went (Gen. xiii : 18), and there he sojourned as a stranger for many years; there he received the promise of the birth of Isaac (Gen. xviii : 1-10); there, too, he lost his wife Sarah (Gen. xxiii : 2); and it was for the burial of Sarah that he was obliged to purchase the cave of Machpelah. The story of that transaction (Gen. xxiii : 3-20) is thoroughly oriental, full of the ceremonious formalities which are still deemed necessary in all transactions at the East. The mourning of the East admits of no privacy, and as Abra-

ham was a sheikh of consequence, his mourning was sure to be interrupted by many visits of condolence. But the climate forbade delay in preparing for the burial of his dead, and he proceeded with all ceremony to negotiate with the Hittites for the purchase of a sepulchre. He stood up before them, and as a stranger who had no claims upon them he asked of them to give him a place of burial. With all their kindly compassion the Hittites had a keen eye to business and doubtless saw here an opportunity for a good bargain, but they could not think of putting it in that way to Abraham. Affecting the noblest generosity and using the most flattering terms of courtesy, they bade him choose among all their sepulchres; the mighty prince had only to make his choice, no one would refuse him. Abraham acknowledged their courtesy by standing up and bowing himself before them, but he knew perfectly well that their offer meant nothing more than that they were ready to sell him a tomb at a good round price. To come somewhat closer to the point, custom next required that some one should act as a middle-man in the purchase proposed; and Abraham begged the good offices of his visitors in conducting the negotiation with the owner of the cave which he desired to secure. To that end he communed with them, saying, "If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of sight, hear me and intreat for me to Ephron, the son of Zohar, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it to me, for a possession of a burying-place amongst you." Of the talk between Ephron and the intervenors we have no account, but Ephron could not consent to appear less nobly

disinterested than all the Hittites had affected to be. "Nay, my lord," he said, in the audience of all that went in at the gate of the city, "Nay, my lord, hear me. The field give I thee, and the cave that is therein. I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee; bury thy dead." This generous offer merely signified that the courteous Ephron was ready to make a bargain for the sale, and so Abraham understood him. If Ephron was so kind as to give him the field, he said, then let him take money for it, and so let Abraham bury his dead. Ephron, however, would not hear of such a thing; the land was of little value, only some four hundred shekels of silver, and what was that between Abraham and Ephron? It was probably a good high price for the property; but Abraham had now learned all that he wanted to know, namely, that Ephron would sell the field, and that his price was four hundred shekels of silver. So, without haggling, he weighed out that sum, "current money with the merchant;" and the field and the cave, and all belonging thereto, were confirmed to Abraham for a possession of a burying-place in due and legal form; that is to say, publicly in the presence of all that entered in at the gate of Hebron.

In due time the hoary patriarch was laid to rest in the same cave, by the hands of his two sons Ishmael and Isaac (Gen. xxv : 9). Many years afterward Jacob was on his way to his father Isaac at Hebron when he lost Rachel and buried her in her lonely tomb "in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem" (Gen. xxxv : 19). Not much later he and his brother Esau buried Isaac beside Abraham and Sarah (Gen. xxxv : 27-29). From Hebron Jacob sent Joseph to visit his brethren at Shechem,

where they had driven their flocks for pasturage, sixty miles off (Gen. xxxvii : 14). It was from Hebron that he went down to Egypt to meet Joseph, who had so strangely become a great prince in that foreign land ; and it was to Hebron and the cave of Machpelah that Joseph brought his father's remains, with so great a company and so magnificent a funeral that the Hittites were astonished at the mourning of the Egyptians (Gen. l : 7-13).

When the time came for Israel to take possession of the land in which their fathers had dwelt as strangers, the King of Hebron entered into a fatal confederacy with other petty sovereigns against Joshua, was taken prisoner with them and was put to death. When the war of the conquest was drawing to a close, Hebron, though still held by Anakim, was given by Joshua to Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, "because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel" (Josh. xiv : 6-14). The gallant old man, who had been a faithful spy, and who, besides Joshua himself, was the only man of the former generation whom God permitted to enter the Promised Land, had no mind to take possession of a place from which the enemy had been already driven. Hebron was a strongly fortified city and was still held by the terrible Anakim ; but Caleb at eighty years of age had a strength of soul and body which a young man might have envied, and he asked to have the unconquered Hebron for his heritage. When it was given him, he took it and destroyed the remnant of the gigantic Anakim (Josh. xv : 13, 14).

It is difficult to understand about these giants. Possibly they were of a race of unusual stature, which tradition subsequently magnified, as national tradition is apt

to magnify the facts and events of early history. Everywhere throughout the East there are traditions of gigantic men of former ages. In the Bible we read of giants before the flood (Gen. vi : 4), and when the spies came back from searching the Promised Land, and reported that they had found giants there, it is very likely that the unworlike multitude of fugitives from Egypt would imagine the giants of Canaan to be such monstrous giants as they had already heard of. The language of the spies would almost admit of such an interpretation ; " all the people," they said, " that we saw in the land are men of great stature ; and there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants ; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight " (Num. xiii : 33). But the wildest imaginations of that time were as nothing to the rabbinical tales of after times. According to them, Og the King of Bashan was an antediluvian giant of such height that the water of the flood rose only to his ankles ! Og therefore survived the flood, and reappears in rabbinical history as Eliezer of Damascus, the servant of Abraham. Compared with Og, Abraham was a pigmy, since the patriarch was only about three hundred feet high ; but Og was terribly afraid of his master, and on one occasion trembled so violently at a rebuke from him as to shake out one of his own teeth. The tooth however was not lost, for Abraham immediately converted it into a comfortable and commodious bedstead ! Compared with Abraham, again, Moses was a dwarf, being only between thirty and forty feet high ; and in a battle with Og, Moses made a prodigious leap to strike the giant, but his blow, though it proved ultimately fatal, only reached Og's ankle. These

stories are not to be rashly rejected as unworthy of credit in this unbelieving age. They are substantially confirmed by the experience of the Rabbi Jochanan, whom Dr. Thomson quotes as follows: "Once, when I was chasing a roe, it fled into a shin-bone. I ran after it and followed it for three miles, but could neither overtake it nor see any end to the bone; so I returned, and was told that this was the shin-bone of Og, King of Bashan!" In comparison with such fables, the Bible accounts, which give no measurements, are tame indeed; but if such stories were abroad among the Israelites at the time of Moses, perhaps it is not strange that a horde of fugitive slaves should have shrunk from encountering the monstrous giants of oriental imagination.

Though the lands of Hebron were given to Caleb and his children, the city itself was made a heritage of the priests of Israel (Josh. xxi : 11), and was, therefore, probably the home of Zachariah. It was also made one of the cities of refuge, to which the involuntary slayer of a man might escape from the avenger of blood (Josh. xx : 7). It was well known to the grotesque hero, Samson; and it was to a hill before Hebron, or perhaps on the road to it, that he carried off the gates of Gaza (Judges xvi : 3).

Later on, Hebron was a favorite haunt of David during his persecution by Saul (1 Sam. xxx : 31). Here he was among his own people of the tribe of Judah, and many whom he had conciliated by gifts and favors (1 Sam. xxx : 26-31). It was here that Abner, coming to make terms with him, was treacherously murdered by Joab (2 Sam. iii : 17-27). Here David was anointed king over Judah and lived as king of Judah for seven



and a half peaceful years (2 Sam. ii : 4-11). Here many of his children were born (2 Sam. iii : 2-5), and here doubtless many of his psalms were written, especially that glorious psalm of kingly triumph, the eighteenth. Here, too, after the death of Saul, he was anointed king over united Israel (2 Sam. v : 3 ; 1 Chron. xi : 1-3) ; but Hebron was at last to have sorrowful association for David, for it was at Hebron that Absalom raised the standard of unfilial revolt (2 Sam. xv : 7-10).

Since the time of David, Hebron has had the checkered history of all the cities of that marvellous land. It was fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chron. xi : 10) ; and, as in the case of Bethlehem and other cities which he sought to defend, its fortifications invited attack. After the captivity, it was rebuilt. It was subsequently taken by the Idumeans, but was recaptured by Judas Maccabeus. From that time on it was in peace until the great revolt in the reign of Vespasian, when it was burnt to ashes. In the eighth century of the Christian era it had been rebuilt, and was known as the Castle of Abraham. In the crusades it was taken by the Christians, and became the see of a bishop, with a church which is now a mosque. In 1834, during a revolt against Ibrahim Pasha, the insurgents, being defeated at Solomon's Pools a few miles south of Jerusalem, took refuge in Hebron, and the hapless city was forthwith stormed and sacked.

Hebron is now called by the Moslems *El Khalil*, or, The Friend, in honor of Abraham, "the friend of God" (James ii : 23). It has a population of 17,000 or 18,000. As of old, it is surrounded by vineyards. In ancient times the grapes were perhaps mostly red, at present they are mostly white. They yield good wine ; and the

juice, when boiled down to one-third of its bulk, becomes a syrup, which in Scripture is called honey. The honey, *dibash*, which Jacob sent down, among his other presents, to his unknown son in Egypt (Gen. xliii : 11) was very likely not the honey of bees, but some of the *dibs*, or grape syrup, which is still made at Hebron ; and diluted with water it would make a refreshing drink in the hot summer of Egypt. Part of Hebron is called *Esh-colah*, and a small stream in the neighborhood is called *Wady Esh-col* ; but this can hardly be the Esh-col from which the spies of Moses carried their wonderful specimens of the fruitfulness of the promised land (Num. xiii : 23, 24). The name most likely comes from Esh-col, the brother of Mamre ; and as Mamre undoubtedly gave his own name to Hebron, it is plausibly suggested that his brother Esh-col may have given his name likewise to a neighboring spot (Gen. xiv : 13, 24 ; xiii : 14). A mile from the city, in front of the Russian hospice, stands an ancient tree, which is called Abraham's Oak, and is said to be the veritable oak, or terebinth (otherwise rendered "the plain"), of Mamre, besides which Abraham had his dwelling for so many years. The tree is a noble one, and must be centuries old ; but the acorn from which it grew did not fall for many centuries after Abraham was laid in the cave of Machpelah. Some years ago a branch of this oak, or terebinth, fell ; and the wood was used in making rosaries, crosses and the like, for sale to pilgrims. Of course it was soon consumed, as these souvenirs or mementos were in great demand. No other branch has fallen since that time, and yet strange to say the traveller will have no difficulty in procuring any number of articles made from the genuine wood of Abraham's Oak,

and at very reasonable rates! Near by Hebron is a village called the Village of the Virgin, where the Holy Family is said to have halted on the journey to Egypt.

Within the city there is considerable trade and some manufacture, principally of colored glass ornaments and leathern water-bottles, which find a ready sale to caravans passing through Hebron on their way to and from Egypt. The houses are of stone, and as they rise one above another on the slopes of the hill they present a striking and noble appearance. The impression is changed, however, when the traveller enters the city; for then he finds himself in the midst of unspeakable filth. There is no drainage and no pavement; and the streets, as they are called only by courtesy, are perennial dunghills. Many of them are arched like tunnels, with dwellings above them, which are approached through the shops below. The shops are horrid dens of darkness, where the merchants sit cross-legged behind counters which are simply stone walls of several feet in thickness. The people are renowned for an excessive politeness which makes the purchase of the smallest article consume almost as much time as Abraham's purchase from Ephron long ago.

The greatest attraction of Hebron is the fact that it contains the tomb of the three patriarchs, and that there is no question of its true site. The cave of Machpelah is enclosed and covered by a great mosque which the Moslems hold to be of such extraordinary sacredness that they permit no Jewish or Christian foot to enter its precincts. During the present century only a few persons of royal rank have been permitted by special firman from the Sultan to do so; and among them was the Prince of Wales, attended fortunately by Dean Stanley from

whom an account of part of their visit is taken. "In a recess on the right," says the Dean, "is the shrine of Abraham, on the left that of Sarah, each guarded by silver gates. The shrine of Sarah we were requested not to enter, as being that of a woman." After some hesitation, and not without a prayer to the patriarch for the permission to enter, the shrine of Abraham was thrown open. "The chamber," continues the Dean, "is cased in marble. The tomb consists of a coffin-like structure, built up of plastered stone or marble and hung with three carpets, green, embroidered with gold. They are said to have been presented by Mohammed II., Selim I., and the late Sultan, Abd el Mejid. Within the area of the mosque or church were shown the tombs of Isaac and Rebekah. They are placed under separate chapels, and the gates are grated, not with silver, but iron bars. To Rebekah's tomb the same decorous rule of the exclusion of male visitors naturally applied as in the case of Sarah's. But on requesting to see the tomb of Isaac, we were entreated not to enter; and on asking, with some surprise, why an objection which had been conceded for Abraham should be raised in the case of his far less eminent son, we were answered that the difference lay in the character of the two patriarchs. Abraham was full of loving-kindness; he had withstood even the resolution of God against Sodom and Gomorrah; he was goodness itself, and would overlook any affront. But Isaac was proverbially jealous, and it was exceedingly dangerous to exasperate him. When Ibrahim Pasha, as conqueror of Palestine, had endeavored to enter he had been driven out by Isaac, and fell back as if thunderstruck.

"The shrines of Jacob and Leah were shown in re-

cesses similar to those of Abraham and Sarah, but in a separate cloister, opposite the entrance of the mosque. Against Leah's tomb, as seen through the iron gate, two green banners reclined, the origin and meaning of which were unknown." The gates of Jacob's tomb were opened, but nothing of special interest was observed. This is all that the visit of these distinguished pilgrims discovered to the world, and it is of little value. The tombs and shrines they saw were not the true resting-places of the patriarchs, which are in the cave beneath. The time will come, and it is probably not far off, when the whole place will be explored and fully described. In the meantime, no doubt whatever exists that the cave of Machpelah is indeed under the great mosque of Hebron, nor is there any reason to believe that the remains of those who were so long ago buried there have been removed or disturbed.

In the valley below Hebron there still remains a spot of historical interest, in the life of David, to which no reference has been made. When the unhappy Saul had fallen before the victorious Philistines on the mountain of Gilboa, the generous David had no revengeful feelings toward the children of the man by whom he had been persecuted for so many years. On the contrary he pitied them and lamented over the fate of Saul himself. But some officious sycophants thought to win the favor of the new sovereign of all Israel by treacherously murdering Saul's offspring. Two such wretched assassins, servants of Saul's son Ishbosheth, entered their master's house on pretext of ordinary business while he was resting on his bed in the heat of the day, stabbed him as he lay there and brought his head to David. But

they found no favor with the new king, who meted out to them the just reward of assassination. We are told that "David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up over the pool in Hebron" (2 Sam. iv : 12). There is little doubt that the great pool which is still to be seen in the valley at the entrance to Hebron is the pool at which David, by a just and terrible example, cleared himself of all complicity in the cruel and cowardly murder.

On leaving Hebron, the Holy Family would pursue its journey southward on the caravan track to Egypt; and a day's march would bring them to the southern boundary of the promised land at Beersheba, or *Bir-es-seba*, as it is called to this day. Beersheba is a spot of ancient and venerable associations. Its name signifies "The Well of the Oath," or "The Well of the Seven," and originated in the great oath of amity which Abraham swore to King Abimelech, and also perhaps refers to the seven wells which he caused to be dug there, and typified by seven ewe lambs which he gave as a present to the king (Gen. xxi : 22-32). According to his pious custom, Abraham planted a grove at Beersheba, "and called on the Name of the Lord, the everlasting God" (Gen. xxi : 33, 34). It was into the wilderness of Beersheba that Hagar and her child were driven by the jealous cruelty of Sarah (Gen. xxi : 14); it was from Beersheba that Abraham set out on his memorable journey to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering to God, and to Beersheba he returned again from Mount Moriah (Gen. xxii : 19). Fifty years later Isaac went to the same place and had a vision of peace, after which he built an altar and offered sacri-

face to God (Gen. xxvi : 23-25) ; and again, another oath made to another Abimelech, after the digging of new wells, caused the old name to be renewed (Gen. xxvi : 26-33). At Beersheba, the aged Jacob halted with his company when on his way to join Joseph in Egypt ; and there he too offered sacrifice, and was comforted with gracious promises (Gen. xlvi : 1-5). In after ages Beersheba became the southernmost place in the borders of Israel, as Dan was the northernmost, so that "from Dan even unto Beersheba" was a proverbial phrase, signifying the whole extent of the country (Judg. xx : 1). In the days of Samuel, Beersheba must have become a place of importance, since we find that two of his evil sons were judges there (1 Sam. viii : 2). In the time of the wicked King Ahab, when Elijah after his triumph over the priests of Baal had been driven out of the northern kingdom by the furious Jezebel, the worn-out prophet fled to Beersheba, and left his servant there while he himself went into the wilderness requesting of God that he might die (1 Kings xix : 1-4). Our version says that the prophet sat down under a juniper tree, but it ought to be a broom tree. Unfortunately, the roots of that tree have been found to make the very best quality of charcoal, and the Arabs have done their best to extirpate the broom trees by digging up their roots. Nevertheless, the broom tree still survives ; and to-day in the wilderness south of Beersheba there are many precisely like that under which the angel found the wearied prophet and ministered to his necessities, so that he slept and ate and slept and ate again, and then was sent on an errand which proved that the cause of God was not so hopeless as the prophet had supposed but was soon to be vindi-

cated in God's own time and in God's own way (1 Kings xix : 5-18). By and by the good King Jehoash took to wife as his queen a maiden of Beersheba, called Zibiah, who became the mother of the good King Joash ; a good father and a good mother being followed by a good son. What lessons there are, written all along these by-places of Scripture history ! A hundred years later, in spite of all lessons and all warning, Beersheba had become a centre of idolatry ; and thither, as to Bethel and Gilgal, pilgrims resorted even from the northern kingdom (Amos v : 4, 5 ; viii : 14). The latter history of Beersheba is unimportant ; its name is not to be found in the New Testament ; and yet it can never be uninteresting to the Christian, not only because of its early associations, but for the certainty that it must have been a station in the journey of the Infant Saviour to Egypt.

The wells of Abraham and Isaac, or two of them at least, are there, though their walls are of comparatively modern construction. Dr. Robinson says, "The larger well is twelve and a half feet in diameter and forty-four and a half feet to the surface of the water, sixteen feet of which, at the bottom, is excavated out of the solid rock. The other well lies fifty-five rods west-southwest, and is five feet in diameter and forty-two feet deep. The water in both is sweet and pure, and in great abundance. Both wells are surrounded with drinking-troughs of stone for camels and flocks, such as were doubtless used of old for the flocks which fed on the adjacent hills. The curb-stones are deeply worn by the friction of the ropes in drawing up water by the hand."

Beyond Beersheba we need not attempt to trace the footsteps of the fugitives. Two days' march through the



wilderness of Shur would bring them to the "river of Egypt" (Num. xxxiv : 5). Thence they may have gone to Migdol, "the Tower," which, for a long time, was the frontier fortress of Egypt; and thence perhaps to Tanis, or Zoan, where God had done "marvellous things" by the hand of Moses, His servant (Psalms lxxviii : 12).

The place where the Holy Family hid itself in Egypt is altogether unknown; but wherever it may have been, Joseph would have little difficulty in finding helpful friends. Egypt was full of Jews. The Jewish race had been greatly favored by Alexander the Great at his conquest of Egypt, and the result had been a large immigration of Jews into that country. In social rank Alexander had put them on a level with his own Macedonians; and although they were afterward deprived of that distinction, and even became odious to the other inhabitants, they continued to prosper, and to form a large and important element of the population. It was in Egypt that the Greek version of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint, was made by learned rabbis, probably in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus. The Jews of Alexandria were under the control of an ethnarch, or governor, of their own race; and among themselves they formed guilds or unions of workmen belonging to different trades and occupations, each of which was bound to care for Jewish craftsmen of the same trade. Through one of these guilds Joseph, as a carpenter, would find no difficulty in obtaining employment until the time came for him to return home.

While the parents of Jesus were hiding him in Egypt from the murderous hand of Herod, Herod himself was drawing to the close of a long and cruel life. Arch-

deacon Farrar's account of Herod's end is so impressive that it may as well be given entire. He says :

“It must have been very shortly after the murder of the Innocents that Herod died. Only five days before his death he had made a frantic attempt at suicide, and had ordered the death of his eldest son Antipater. His deathbed was accompanied by circumstances of peculiar horror, and it has been asserted that he died of a loathsome disease which is hardly mentioned in history except in the case of men who have been rendered infamous by an atrocity of persecuting zeal. On his bed of intolerable anguish, in that splendid and luxurious palace which he had built for himself under the palms of Jericho, swollen with disease and scorched by thirst—ulcerated externally and glowing inwardly with ‘a soft, slow fire’—surrounded by plotting sons and plundering slaves, detesting all and detested by all—longing for death as a release from his tortures, yet dreading it as the beginning of worse terrors—stung by remorse, yet still unslaked with murder—a horror to all around him, yet in his guilty conscience a worse terror to himself—devoured by the premature corruption of an anticipated grave—eaten of worms as though visibly smitten by the finger of God's wrath after seventy years of successful villainy—the wretched old man whom men had called ‘the Great’ lay, in savage frenzy, awaiting his last hour. As he knew that none would shed one tear for him, he determined that they should shed many for themselves, and issued an order that, under pain of death, the principal families in the kingdom and chiefs of the tribes should come to Jericho. They came; and then, shutting them in the Hippodrome, he secretly commanded his sister Salome

that at the moment of his death they should all be massacred. And so, choking as it were with blood, devising massacres in his very delirium, the soul of Herod passed forth into the night. In purple robes, with crown and sceptre and precious stones, the corpse was placed upon its splendid bier, and was accompanied with military pomp and burning incense to its grave in the Herodium, not far from the place where Christ was born."

## CHAPTER V.

### THE RETURN FROM EGYPT.

THE news of Herod's death would soon spread into Egypt. The report of it reached Joseph by an angelic communication, and he immediately set out on his return, with the intention, as it appears, of going back to Bethlehem. Eastern people do not readily change their abode; and having been obliged to leave Nazareth on account of the enrollment at Bethlehem, it is probable that Joseph had there found sufficient employment to warrant his settling permanently in the city of his forefathers. If so, he would naturally think of returning to Bethlehem rather than to Nazareth, which was eighty miles further off. But when he reached the border of Judea he heard news which alarmed him. The tiger, Herod, had been succeeded by a true cub of his own breed. In his will he had assigned the kingdom of Judea to his son Archelaus, who had celebrated his accession, even before his father's will had been ratified at Rome, by the massacre of some three thousand of his unhappy subjects in the very temple itself. But Antipas, a less bloody son of the same father, now reigned in Galilee, and Joseph thought it prudent to turn aside from his contemplated route and to go to his old home at Nazareth. His course would now lie, not through Hebron, but through the plains of Philistia and Sharon, which line the seashore

of the Holy Land, and thence over the hills into the Plain of Esdraelon, to the north of which was Nazareth.

Little, if any, of our Saviour's life was spent in the plains which border the Mediterranean Sea. Once indeed, we know that He "came into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon" (Matt. xv : 21 ; Mark vii : 24), but we do not know that He ever visited the Plain of Philistia or the Plain of Sharon in the whole course of his ministry. The only time when he must almost certainly have passed through those most interesting parts of the Holy Land was in the return from Egypt to Nazareth. But no view of Palestine could be considered satisfactory which should omit these celebrated plains ; and we shall, therefore, here take a rapid glance at them from south to north, before proceeding to trace the more certain footsteps of the Saviour as recorded in the Gospels.

Passing the southern border, the Holy Family would enter the Plain of Philistia.

The name Philistines signifies *foreigners*, and shows that the people who bore it were not the original inhabitants of Canaan, nor even of Philistia. They are said (Amos ix : 7) to have come from Caphtor, that is, in all probability, from Crete, though there are strong reasons for believing that they must have been settled for some time in Egypt before they conquered the Avim, who formerly inhabited the villages of Philistia (Deut. ii : 23). It is singular indeed that these foreigners, who never occupied more than a small part of the country, should have given the name of Palestine to the whole of it. Such remnants of their language as have been preserved show them to have been of the race of Shem.

They were a brave and warlike people, skilled in the use of war chariots, with which the Israelites were unable to contend (Judg. i : 19). They were also devoted to commerce. Of their political constitution we know nothing; but it appears that they formed a confederacy of five districts, each having a capital town. The five cities of the Philistines were Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath and Ekron, besides which they had a sacred city or perhaps only a temple, called *Beth-Dagon*, or the House of Dagon (Josh. xv : 41). In the time of Abraham, Abimelech their king had his residence at Gerar, in the extreme south of Philistia (Gen. xx : 2 ; xxi : 32 ; xxvi : 1, 26). At the time of the Exodus they had become so powerful that it was out of the question for the undisciplined multitude that had gone up out of Egypt to cope with them (Exod. xiii : 17). For ages an irreconcilable feud continued between the Philistines and the Israelites, with varying fortunes to either party. At the outset Israel had a speedy triumph, for under Joshua, Ekron, Ashdod and Gaza were taken (Josh. xv : 45). The success however was only temporary, and soon afterward the Philistines were again in possession of all their cities. In the mountains the Israelites were generally successful, but on descending to the plains they were beaten by the chariots of gigantic enemies, for giants were still to be found at Gath, Ashdod and Gaza (Josh. xi : 22). So the Israelites held possession of the "hill country," and also the line of lower hills bordering on the plain, while the Philistines held the low land, and sometimes pressed Israel far within the hill country. During the period of the Judges a continual border war was carried on, with intervals of comparative peace but with frequent outbursts

of fury. In the life of Samson the Philistines had the upper hand (Judg. xiii : 1 ; xv : 11); and their crowning triumph, in capturing the ark of God, hastened the death of the judge and prophet Eli (1 Sam. iv : 17, 18). In the latter part of the reign of Saul they had pushed their advantage to the utmost, and it was after a defeat by the Philistines on Mount Gilboa, the very centre of Israel, that Saul fell upon his own sword. Under David the Philistines were at last reduced; but they continued to be troublesome even into the reign of Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii : 8).

Of the five cities of the Philistines the most southerly is Gaza, now *Ghuzzeh* or *Ghazza*. It is on the summit of a hill half a mile from the sea, the hill being about two miles in circumference and having evidently been once wholly enclosed by fortifications. At a distance it has an imposing appearance. It is a place of considerable wealth, derived from traffic with caravans; but the inhabitants live in the meanest and most sordid way. Notwithstanding its population of fifteen or twenty thousand, Gaza is emphatically a place of ruins. The existing houses have been built of the ruins of previous structures. The roofs of squalid hovels are supported by fragments of beautifully sculptured capitals piled one upon the other. Marble and granite columns in every degree of preservation are found in all quarters of the city, and in the cemetery the artist employed in making drawings for Roberts' magnificent work found a superb Corinthian capital of the purest classical taste.

Gaza is early mentioned in Holy Scripture (Gen. x : 19). It is famous in the history of Samson, who in contempt of the inhabitants carried off the gates of the town

and deposited them on a hill before Hebron (Judg. xvi : 3). In Gaza the Hebrew Hercules met his fate with more than classic heroism. Blind, and set up for mockery by his captors in the temple of their god, Samson prayed for strength to come to him just once more ; and then, as he drew together the great pillars of the temple, in which the multitude of his enemies was assembled, he cried : " Let me die with the Philistines ! " The pillars yielded, the temple fell, the heroic Samson died ; but " the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life " (Judg. xvi : 21-30). To recount the history of Gaza would almost require a rehearsal of the history of Israel, for it is mentioned in nearly every book of the Old Testament, and once in the New. To the great conquerors of the East it has been the key to Egypt. Warriors of Babylon, Chaldea, Persia, have occupied it. Alexander besieged it for five months, and when he took it, stained the lustre of his conquest by a merciless slaughter of the inhabitants. In the crusades it fell alternately under Moslem and Christian rule. Almost within the present century, Napoleon occupied it ; and in 1840 Gaza saw the Egyptian army of Ibrahim Pasha sullenly retire from Syria, at the order of the great powers of Europe.

Ashkelon, or Ascalon, now *Askalan*, overlooks the sea. It can never have had a natural port ; the roadstead is open to every wind that blows, except from the east ; but the remains of a great mole in the form of a horse-shoe, which once afforded shelter for shipping, are still visible. The waves dash over the ruins of stately buildings all along the shore, proving the incorrectness of Volney's theory that the sea has receded from the ancient site of



Ashkelon. It was a great city in ancient times, and was famous for the worship of Derketo, the Philistine Venus, to whom fish were sacred and in whose honor fish-tanks were built and religiously guarded. Her daughter was worshipped under the names of Semiramis and Astarte. Ashkelon was the scene of one of the exploits of Samson, and for ages it was regarded by the Israelites as one of the most hateful and formidable of the cities of Philistia. When Saul and his sons were defeated, David in his beautiful elegy exclaimed, "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph!" Ashkelon has the doubtful honor of having been the birthplace of Herod, who took from it his surname of Ascalonites, and who did much to beautify and adorn his native city. He built in it fountains and baths, which he surrounded with colonnades and extensive gardens. In the wars with the Romans, the Jews in vain endeavored to take possession of Ashkelon, which seems then to have been a sort of independent republic under Roman protection. The citizens long continued to be uncompromising enemies of Christianity. During the crusades, it was alternately occupied by Christians and Moslems, but was entirely dismantled by Saladin. It owed its restoration to Richard Cœur de Lion, who rebuilt the fortress, though the jealousy of other Christian leaders prevented the completion of his work. Since 1270 Ashkelon has been left in ruins, as prophet after prophet predicted that it should be (Amos i : 8 ; Zeph. ii : 4 ; Zech. ix : 5). It has become literally a desolation.

Ashdod, now *Esdud*, was perhaps the head of the Philistine confederacy, as we learn that the ark of God, when

captured from the Israelites, was first taken to Ashdod (1 Sam. v : 1). The ark was placed as a trophy in the temple of Dagon (1 Sam. v : 2), a god, half man and half fish, of whom marbles of Nineveh show both the form and the name, so that this deity appears certainly to have been borrowed and imported from Assyria or Babylonia, though probably at second-hand from the Phœnicians. At the distribution of the Promised Land among the tribes, Ashdod was assigned to Judah; but the gift was of small advantage, since Ashdod was never conquered until the time of King Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi : 6). Even Uzziah's conquest was not permanent; and it was not until fifty years after his death that Ashdod was finally subjugated by the Assyrians. In the New Testament, Ashdod is mentioned under the name of Azotus, where Philip "was found" after baptizing the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts viii : 38). It is now a large but wretched village, surrounded with orchards and gardens of wonderful fertility. The site of the original Ashdod is buried under drifts of sand overgrown with cactus, as Dr. Thomson thinks the present Esdud is also surely destined to be. He found the inhabitants boorish and uncivil in their intercourse with strangers.

Of Gath the very site is now unknown, though different travellers confidently express contradictory opinions concerning it. Perhaps the more probable opinion is that which locates it at *Tel es Safiyeh*, a huge white limestone rock rising from the plain and gleaming in the sunshine, as it did centuries ago in the time of the crusades when King Fulke of Anjou built a castle upon its summit and called it *Blanche Garde*, the White Fortress. It will always be memorable as the birthplace of Goliath,

the Philistine champion whom the stripling David slew with a stone out of a sling. Goliath was one of the last of the gigantic race which had struck terror into the Israelites on their first approach to the Land of Promise. He is said to have been nine feet in height, and the head of his spear was some thirteen pounds in weight. The Philistines were encamped on the slope of a hill, on one side of a *wady* or valley through which a torrent rushed in the winter season. The valley was then called the Vale of Elah, from the terebinths which grew there. It is now called *Wady es Sunt*, or the Vale of Acacias. The army of Saul was encamped on another hill opposite. From a literary point of view, as well as for its historical interest, the story of David's combat with Goliath, which brought about the dispersal of the Philistine army (1 Sam. xvii : 1-54), is one of the most striking in the Old Testament.

The jealousy of Saul against his own deliverer resulted in greater enmity than that of the Philistines themselves, and the time came when David was glad to escape from Israel altogether, and to take refuge with the Philistines in Gath. His friendly intentions however were naturally suspected ; so he feigned madness, which at the East is regarded with a kindly though superstitious reverence. Still, even in his assumed character, he did not feel safe ; and from Gath he went to the Cave of Adullam, not far off, "where every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him" (1 Sam. xxii : 2). He was soon at the head of a strong body of men. Again, however, in sheer despair at the relentless pursuit of Saul, David went to Gath with six hundred followers,

and was treated with confidence and hospitality (1 Sam. xxvii : 1, 2).

Ekron, one of the five famous cities of the Philistines, is now an insignificant village called *Akir*. Of its history in Biblical times we know very little, and it has no later history whatever. The only incident of importance concerning it is connected with the capture of the Ark of the Covenant by the Philistines (1 Sam. vi). When the ark was first taken, it was sent to Ashdod and thence to Beth-Dagon, or the Temple of Dagon. Next day the idol of Dagon was found on its face before the ark. Being set up again, it was found on the morrow morning broken and mutilated, so that only "the stump," or *fishy part*, of Dagon, was left. Besides this portent, the people were afflicted with so strange and horrible a disease that they were glad to be rid of the ark, and sent it to Ashdod. The people of Ashdod fared no better, and sent the ark to Ekron; but the ark brought the same calamity to Ekron. A great assembly of the Philistines consulted the priests and diviners concerning the plague, and were told to return the ark of God to the Israelites, and to send a trespass offering to the God of Israel, whom they had offended by capturing the ark. But in order to be sure that the ark was really the cause of their troubles, diviners bade the Philistines "make a new cart and take two milch kine, on which there had no yoke been laid, and to tie the kine to the cart and bring their calves home from them." Then they were to lay their trespass offering on the cart behind the ark and let the kine go. If, instead of following their calves, the kine took the way to the place of the ark in Israel, it would be manifest that it was not chance, but the hand of the

God of Israel, that had smitten them. All was done according to the direction of the priests and diviners, and the kine instantly took "the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh," and went along the highway, "lowing as they went." The lords of the Philistines followed them to the border of Beth-shemesh, and there the Levites received the ark and offered sacrifice to the Lord. But the men of Beth-shemesh committed a great sacrilege by looking into the ark, and they too were smitten so that many of them died. They therefore implored the men of Kirjath-jearim to come and take the ark; and at Kirjath-jearim it rested for twenty years.

The god of Ekron was Beelzebub, the god of flies, and was perhaps worshipped for his fancied protection against the swarms of flies which the filthy habits of the people brought upon them.

Beit Dejan, an inconsiderable village somewhat less than six miles southeast of Joppa, may, perhaps, be the Beth-Dagon or House of Dagon mentioned in Scripture; but it is at least ten miles to the north of Ekron, while the Beth-Dagon of the Bible seems to have been in the near vicinity of Ekron. It is possible, however, that this village may be the ancient Beth-Dagon, and at least the name suffices to prove that the Philistines were at one time permanently established in the Plain of Sharon.

The neighborhood of Akir is still fertile, and its fields wave with rich harvests of grain, as the whole plain of Philistia once did. If the Holy Family returned through that plain in the time of harvest, Joseph would be sure to show the Child Jesus how easy it would be for Samson to set fire to the shocks of grain by his cunning device of tying firebrands to the tails of foxes (or more proba-

bly jackals, which abound in that region), and letting the frightened beasts loose from the hills upon the plain. In the dry season the fire would spread with great rapidity, and the Philistines would find themselves assailed by an enemy against whom they could make no defence. To this day the dread of fire in the harvest fields is a constant cause of alarm to the inhabitants of that country. The whole plain and the adjacent upland country, passed by the Holy Family, had been the scene of the exploits of Samson, and of some of the exploits and sufferings of their great ancestor David, and the scenes of those events would not be unnoticed or unnamed in their discourse. But at length they would pass a low range of hills, and find themselves in the Plain of Sharon.

Dean Stanley says: "The corn-fields of Philistia melt into a plain less level and less fertile, though still strongly marked off from the mountain wall of Ephraim, as that of Philistia is from the hills of Judah and Dan. This is Sharon. It is interspersed with corn-fields, and thinly studded with trees, the remnants, apparently, of a great forest, which existed here down to the second century. Eastward, the hills of Ephraim look down upon it—the huge, rounded ranges of Ebal and Gerizim towering above the rest; and at their feet the wooded cone, on the summit of which stood Samaria. But its chief fame then, as now, was for its excellence as a pasture land. Its wide undulations are sprinkled with Bedouin tents and vast flocks of sheep, the true successors of 'the herds which were fed in Sharon,' in David's reign under 'Shitrai, the Sharonite,' and of the folds of flocks, which Isaiah foretold in Sharon as the mark of the restored Israel. Probably this very fact, then as now, rendered

it insecure, and therefore unfrequented by the Israelites of the mountain country above; at any rate, during the whole period of the Old Dispensation, no one historical name or event is attached to this district."

Entering this peaceful plain, the Holy Family would soon arrive at Ramleh, if Ramleh was then in existence, or certainly at the place where Ramleh now stands. Thence their route would lead them through many a fertile field, to the gardens and orchards of Lydda; and as they journeyed onward through a land which bloomed with never-failing flowers of every hue, they would surely remember the famous exclamation of the royal Lover in the Song of Songs, "I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley" (Cant. ii: 1). It is a curious thing that, while the flowers so named cannot now be identified, it is quite certain that the one was not a rose, and that the other was not a lily! The rose is found nowhere in Palestine, except on the lofty Hermon. It is nowhere mentioned in the canonical scriptures, though we read of it in the apocrypha (Eccles. xxiv: 14; xxxix: 13-18). The Hebrew word translated "rose" in the Canticles is believed to have been really the narcissus, which abounds in the Plain of Sharon, and is highly esteemed by the inhabitants. That guess is probably correct; but there is a good deal of question about the lily. Since we read of "the lily among thorns," we have an intimation of its not infrequent surroundings; since its bloom is compared with the lips of the beloved (Cant. v: 13), we may suppose its color to have been red; and since our Saviour made the lily the text of one of his most lovely discourses (Matt. vi: 28; Luke xii: 27), we may understand that the flower in question, whatever it may have been, was

a common flower in Galilee. These particulars, however, are not sufficient to identify the lily of the Bible, though they do justify a rejection of some guesses at its identity. Thus, Dr. Thomson's supposition that it is a variety of marsh-mallow, which grows into a bush full of flowers and is often found among thorns, is set aside by the fact that the colors of these flowers are purple and white, not red. It also negatives Captain Conder's selection of the blue iris; and it would cause us to reject Dean Stanley's mention of the yellow water lily of Lake Huleh (the Waters of Merom), if the Dean did not himself set it aside. On the whole, perhaps the most probable conjecture is that which identifies the lily with the scarlet anemone, though we must not forget that the old Hebrew word, *shushan*, which is rendered by *lily* in our version, is now commonly employed by the Arabs to designate any bright-colored flower.

Journeying through the flower-bespangled plain, the travellers would either enter or pass by a city which was then in the full flush of youthful prosperity. It had always been one of Herod's ambitions to establish a seaport on the coast of his dominions, to which nature had denied a safe harbor. The port of Joppa was not capable of improvement in that age, since the absence of explosives made it impossible to remove the reefs which surround the basin and impede the entrance of shipping. Herod was therefore obliged to look elsewhere. At length his choice fell upon a spot about thirty-five miles north of Joppa and about twenty-two miles south of Mount Carmel. It was an obscure place, then known as Strato's Tower, where he erected his beautiful maritime city. The harbor was constructed with enormous labor and



expense, since the materials were of immense weight and were brought from a distance. To protect the shipping from the prevailing south winds, he made a break-water of vast stones fifty feet in length, eighteen in breadth and nine in thickness, which he let down into the water to a depth of twenty fathoms. This prodigious circular mole was two hundred feet wide, and upon it were erected several large towers, the greatest of which was named from Drusus, the son-in-law of Cæsar. The entrance to Herod's harbor was on the north, and the whole basin was enclosed with a quay for merchandise. All along the nearly circular haven were edifices of polished stone, and a temple, visible from a great distance at sea, answered the purpose of a lighthouse. In compliment to Augustus, the city was called Cæsarea; and after twelve years from the inception of the work, Herod had the satisfaction of knowing that he was the founder of the most beautiful commercial city in the East. But it was distinctly not a Jewish city. Though on Israeli-tish soil, its inhabitants were mostly heathen, and for their delectation, as well as for the ornamentation of Cæsarea, Herod built a theatre and also a magnificent amphitheatre, conveniently situated so as to command a prospect of the sea and of such dimensions as to accommodate a vast concourse of spectators. The security of the harborage and the salubrity of the place soon brought to Cæsarea a large, enterprising and wealthy population; and as the seat of Roman government it had all the advantages of a provincial capital.

In the New Testament we have frequent mention of Cæsarea. When Philip, the deacon, "was found" at Azotus, we are told that he went on preaching to

Cæsarea (Acts viii : 40); and there, it seems, he must have made his permanent abode. At all events he was settled there a quarter of a century later, at the time of Paul's return from his third missionary journey, keeping his own house, and living with his four gifted daughters (Acts xxi : 8, 9). Cæsarea was the scene of the first gentile baptism, for it was there that the Centurion Cornelius lived, and it was to Cæsarea that Peter went by angelic command, under the injunction thenceforward to deem no human soul "common or unclean." While he was yet preaching to them the message of the gospel, we are told that the "Holy Ghost fell upon all them that heard the word;" whereupon Peter saw that it would be absurd to refuse baptism to men on whom the power of the Spirit had fallen even before baptism (Acts x : 24, 44-48).

It was about four years after the baptism of the first gentile converts that Herod Agrippa died in the proud city of his grandfather. He had ordered magnificent games to be celebrated in the theatre, in honor of the emperor, and attended them in person, gorgeously apparelled in robes of silver cloth. As he appeared in the theatre, the sun shone full upon him and the sheen of his robes glittered in the eyes of the multitude. It had become the fashion to hail the Roman emperors as gods, while yet alive; and the magnificence of Herod prompted the crowd to pay him a like honor. Therefore, when he made an oration, the people gave a great shout, crying, "It is the voice of a god, not of a man." Herod permitted the blasphemous homage, and in few hours his mortality was proved by one of the most horrible and disgusting of deaths (Acts xii : 20-23).

Paul landed at the port of Cæsarea on his return from his second missionary journey; he tarried there for some time on his return from his third missionary journey; and not long afterward he was brought back to the same place as a prisoner from Jerusalem (Acts xxiii : 23-33). There he remained a prisoner for two years (Acts xxiv : 27), at the beginning of which he delivered his famous oration before the Roman governor. Felix trembled at the apostle's announcement of coming judgment, but was content to dismiss him to a more convenient season, and at last left him in chains (Acts xxiv : 25-27). It was toward the close of his imprisonment that Paul made his great defense in the presence of the governor Festus who had succeeded Felix and of the young King Agrippa, son of the unhappy Herod Agrippa of whom we have just spoken, and also of the young queen Berenice (Acts xxvi : 1-29). King Agrippa was "almost persuaded to be a Christian" by the earnest eloquence of Paul, and the verdict was that nothing but Paul's own appeal to Cæsar prevented him from being set at liberty (Acts xxvi : 32). Thus, by what seemed to be an error of judgment, but what Paul himself doubtless believed to be a clear guidance of divine providence, the apostle was sent as the "prisoner of the Lord" to preach the gospel at Rome also, and leaving Cæsarea for the last time he sailed to Rome.

Long ages afterward Cæsarea was the home of the Christian historian Eusebius; it was the scene of some of the labors of the illustrious Origen; and it was the birthplace of Procopius. It was still a place of importance during the crusades. It is now utterly desolate; only fragments of the vast works of Herod remain; the ruins of the city have been used as quarries for the

buildings of other towns ; only the name of Cæsarea now lingers in the modern name of *Kaisariyeh*, which is still given to the site of the beautiful city of Herod the Great.

A few short miles northward of Cæsarea the Holy Family would come in sight of Mount Carmel, sacred in the history of Israel and in the estimation of mankind. The name of Carmel signifies the *Park*, or the *Well Wooded Place*, and both designations are appropriate. Carmel is more like a vast rolling park than a mountain range. It extends from the promontory, where it seems to push itself into the sea and where its elevation is only five hundred and sixty feet above the Mediterranean, for twelve miles in a southeasterly direction to a village called *Esfia*, where the height is seventeen hundred and forty feet. The highest peak, however, is about a mile and a half south of *Esfia*, and rises to something over eighteen hundred feet. At its southeastern end the mountain breaks down abruptly into the hills of Samaria. The seaward side of the range descends in gradual slopes to the Plain of Sharon ; but on the other side it falls precipitously to the banks of the river Kishon. The rock is limestone, intermixed with flint ; and, as is not unusual in limestone formations, it abounds in caves, many of which are of considerable length and extremely tortuous. Carmel is thickly covered with a heavy growth of various trees and shrubs, and is richly decked with flowers. Dean Stanley says that the shrubberies of Carmel are thicker than in any other part of Central Palestine. Other travellers speak of its impenetrable brushwood of oaks and evergreens, its rocky dells and deep jungles of copse, its profusion of hollyhocks, jasmines, flowering creepers, and all the flowers of that part of the Holy

Land. Indeed, Van de Velde says that he had seen not one flower in Galilee or in the plains along the coast that he did not find on Carmel, fragrant and lovely as of old; and Martineau describes the whole mountain side, at the time of his visit, as being clothed with blossoms and flowering shrubs and fragrant herbs. Well might the Hebrew prophet speak of "the excellency of Carmel and Sharon" in the same sentence, since both were alike lovely (Isa. xxxv:2), and very beautifully does the Beloved, in the Song of Songs, compare the head of his bride to the rich and perfumed foliage of leafy Carmel (Cant. vii:5). It is supposed from Jeremiah iv:26, that Carmel was once thickly inhabited, and St. Jerome says that in his time the sides of the mountain were covered with vines and olives. If it ever was so, it is not so now; the fruitful place has indeed become a wilderness. Jackals make the night vocal, if not musical, with their plaintive cry; the howl of the hyena is likewise heard; panthers are not entirely unknown; and the monks of Carmel, searching for medicinal herbs, discover huge serpents lurking in the thickets.

Carmel has been sacred even to the heathen, but an altar of Jehovah existed on one of its "high places" before the worship of Baal had been introduced into Israel (1 Kings xviii:30). There was an ancient custom among the people of resorting thither on Sabbath days and new moon festivals (2 Kings iv:23); and it is probable that the place had some character of sanctity, even before it came into possession of Israel. In later times its fame spread far beyond the limits of Palestine. Pythagoras visited it, and so did his biographer, Iamblichus. Tacitus tells a mysterious story of a visit made to

Carmel by Vespasian. The mighty Roman found there neither image nor temple, only an altar and worship; and on his consulting the god of Carmel by sacrifice concerning weighty matters which he was then secretly meditating, the priest Basilides, after inspecting the victims, cried aloud, "What hast thou in mind, Vespasian? Thou art laying the foundations of a mighty edifice!"

In the Christian era Carmel has been sacred indeed. In the first ages anchorites resorted thither, and made their abode among the many caves. About the year 400, John of Jerusalem established the monastic order of Carmelites, and one of its greatest generals was Simon Stoke, of Kent in England, whose remains lie buried on the mountain where he spent nearly twenty years of his life. Among the many illustrious pilgrims to Mount Carmel St. Louis of France is numbered, and the English Edward I. was enrolled as a member of the Order of Carmel. The Carmelite monks have had many misfortunes. Again and again their monastery has been destroyed. That which gave shelter to the wounded French soldiers in 1799 was razed to the ground in 1821 during the Greek revolt; and the convent which now stands on the promontory fronting the sea is the work of one poor monk, who begged the means for its erection and who laid the first stone of the structure in 1828. In all respects the Convent of Mar Elyas, as it is popularly called though really dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, is the most beautiful in Palestine. It is built in the modern Italian style, with sixty windows on the front, with walls massive as those of a fortress, and the rear wall covered with fine slabs of porcelain. The view from its terraced gardens is superb. To the north lies St. Jean d'Acre, looking so

near in the clear atmosphere as almost to be touched with the hand. On the east and northeast are the mountains of Galilee, with their irregular outlines and of different altitudes, studded with villages and towns. On the south is the magnificent promontory of Athlit, with its gigantic ruins. The whole view is unspeakably grand and impressive, even apart from the venerable associations, which connect it with the two great prophets Elijah and Elisha.

Within the convent, which has always been called the Convent of Elijah (*Deir Mar Elyas*), as Carmel itself is called the Mountain of Elijah (*Jebel Mar Elyas*), is shown a cave under the altar, which is said to be the veritable cave in which Elijah found a refuge from his persecutors. Not far off is a place called the Garden of Elijah, where, as elsewhere on Carmel, are found the hollow stones called by geologists geodes. When broken they are found to contain crystallized quartz or chalcedony. There is a curious tradition that they are melons, peaches, apples, and other fruit, petrified by Elijah in punishment of an offence against hospitality to which he was subjected. Miss Rogers, one of the writers of *Picturesque Palestine*, who lived for many years in that neighborhood, gives the legend as she received it from a peasant on the spot. This is the story: "In the days of Mar Elyas (Elijah) a certain man possessed a large garden in this valley. His fruit trees flourished exceedingly, and his watermelons were renowned for their size and flavor. One day Elijah passed by this garden and saw its owner gathering melons, and there was a great heap of them on the ground; and Elijah said, 'O friend, give me of the fruit of your garden; out of your abundance a little fruit

to quench my thirst!" And the man answered, 'O, my lord, this is not fruit that you see; these are but heaps of stones.' And Elijah replied, 'Be it so!' And immediately all the fruit of the garden, the gathered and the ungathered, was turned to stone!"

From the Convent of Mar Elyas, which is five hundred and fifty-six feet above the sea, the central ridge of Carmel extends in solitude, unbroken by a single dwelling, to Esfia, where the height is seventeen hundred and forty-two feet. Three and a half miles distant is *El Maharrakah*, the traditional place of the contest of Elijah with four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and four hundred "prophets of the groves," that is, prophets of Ashtaroth or Astarte (1 Kings xviii). "The tradition," says Dean Stanley, "is unusually trustworthy. It is one of the very few, perhaps the only case, in which the recollection of an alleged event has been actually retained in the native Arabic nomenclature. Many names of towns have been so preserved, but here is no town, only a shapeless ruin, yet the spot has a name, 'El Maharrakah,' the 'Burning,' or the 'Sacrifice.' The Druses, some of whom inhabit the neighboring villages, come here to perform a yearly sacrifice, and though it is possible that this practice may have originated the name yet it is more probable that the practice itself arose from some earlier tradition attached to the spot. But be the tradition good or bad, the localities adapt themselves to the event in almost every particular. There, on the highest point of the mountain, may well have stood on its sacred 'high place' the altar of the Lord, which Jezebel had cast down. Close beneath, on a wide upland sweep, under the shade of ancient olives and round a well of



water,—said to be perennial, and which may therefore have escaped the general drought and have been able to furnish water for the trenches round the altar,—must have been ranged on one side the king and people with the eight hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and Astarte, and on the other side the solitary and commanding figure of the prophet of the Lord. Full before them opened the whole Plain of Esdraelon, with Tabor and kindred ranges in the distance; on the rising ground at the opening of the valley the city of Jezreel, with Ahab's palace and Jezebel's temple distinctly visible; in the near foreground, immediately under the base of the mountain, was clearly seen the winding stream of the Kishon, working its way through the narrow pass of the hills into the Bay of Acre. Such a scene, with such recollections of the past, with such sights of the present, was indeed a fitting theatre for a conflict more momentous than any which their ancestors had fought in the plain below. This is not the place to enlarge upon the intense solemnity and significance of that conflict, which lasted on the mountain height from morning till noon, from noon till the time of the evening sacrifice. It ended at last in the level plain below, where Elijah 'brought' the defeated prophets 'down' the steep sides of the mountain 'to the torrent of Kishon, and slew them there.' The closing scene remains. From the slaughter by the side of the Kishon the king 'went up' at Elijah's bidding, once again to the peaceful glades of Carmel, to join in the sacrificial feast. And Elijah, too, ascended to 'the top of the mountain,' and there, with his face upon the earth, remained wrapt in prayer, whilst his servant mounted to the highest point of all, whence there is a wide view of

the Mediterranean Sea over the western shoulder of the ridge. The sun was now gone down, but the cloudless sky was lit up with the long bright glow which succeeds an eastern sunset. Seven times the servant climbed and looked, and seven times there was nothing; the sky was still clear, the sea was still calm. At last, out of the far horizon, there rose a little cloud—the first that had for days and months passed across the heavens—and it grew in the deepening shades of evening, and at last the whole sky was overcast, and the forests of Carmel shook in the welcome sound of those mighty winds, which in eastern regions precede a coming tempest. Each from his separate height, the king and the prophet descended. And the king mounted his chariot at the foot of the mountain, lest the long hoped-for rain should swell the torrent of the Kishon, as in the days when it swept away the host of Sisera; and ‘the hand of the Lord was upon Elijah,’ and he girt his mantle about his loins, and, amidst the rushing storm with which the night closed in, he ‘ran before the chariot,’ as the Bedouins of his native Gilead still run, with inexhaustible strength, to the entrance of Jezreel, distant though still visible from the scene of his triumph.”

Carmel was probably the scene of another fiery triumph of Elijah. Ahaziah, the son and successor of Ahab, had learned nothing from the evil fortunes of his magnificent father and his wicked mother, but was wholly given to idolatry. Meeting with an accident by which he was disabled, he sent to consult the oracle of Beelzebub at Ekron, but his messengers were met by a strange, wild figure, which commanded them to turn back. When the king demanded why they had returned without per-

forming their errand, they replied that a man met them and said, "Go, turn again to the king that sent you and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Is it because there is no God in Israel that thou sendest to inquire of Beelzebub, the God of Ekron? Therefore thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up. Thou shalt surely die." When the king learned that the prophet of evil who had met his messengers was a man with flowing hair and beard, girt with a leathern girdle round his loins, he forthwith knew it to be Elijah the Tishbite and sent fifty men to apprehend him. With feigned courtesy, the captain of the company addressed the prophet as he sat on the top of the mount: "Thou man of God," he said, "the king hath bidden thee come down;" to which was given the fearful answer, "If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume thee and thy company." So the fifty men perished, and another fifty after them; but when the captain of the third prayed humbly for forgiveness, the Lord bade Elijah go to the king. The prophet went and stood before the king, but only to repeat the words of doom that had already been pronounced to the king's messengers. This was the last interview of the prophet of Carmel with the house of Ahab, which had so stubbornly refused to be reformed. Elijah represented the sure vengeance of a violated law; but his spirit was far other than the spirit of the gospel. Ages later, when Christ's disciples were offended by the churlish rudeness of some villagers of Samaria, they looked upward, it may be, to the heights of Carmel rising before them in the distance, and recalling the destruction of Elijah's foes two of them asked their Master, "Wilt Thou that we command fire to come

down from heaven and consume them even as Elijah did?" But their Master turned upon them and rebuked them, saying solemnly and tenderly, "Ye know what manner of spirit ye are of; the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke ix : 51-56).

If Elijah was a prophet of vengeance and retribution, Elisha was a minister of mercy, doing good continually; and one of the most charming stories of his life belongs to Carmel (2 Kings iv : 8-37). "It fell on a day," we are told, that Elisha passed to Shunem in the Plain of Esdraelon, and was hospitably entertained by a good woman there. She revered the prophet's holiness, and provided for him a little chamber on the wall with modest comforts, which should be at his disposal always. The prophet was in favor with the king, and "it fell on a day" that he sent his servant to inquire of his kind hostess whether he should use his influence at court in her behalf. She wisely thought it best to remain among her own people, and then the prophet promised her the boon of motherhood, for until then she was childless. The promised child was born, and grew for years; and then again "it fell on a day" that in the field among the reapers he cried to his father, "My head! my head!" The father had him carried to his mother, but the child was sick unto death, and at noontide, on his mother's knees, he died. There was no help now, unless through the prophet; so she laid the boy in the prophet's chamber, on the prophet's bed, and hastened to Mount Carmel, where the prophet was. While he was still far off he saw her coming, and sent his servant to ask, "Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with

the child?" But she had naught to say to the servant; she hastened to the prophet, cast herself before him, embraced his feet, and moaned out her complaint. The gentle prophet bade his servant go with her at once and lay his prophet's staff upon the child; but the Shunemite refused to go with Gehazi. "As the Lord liveth," she said, "and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." So the prophet himself went with the Shunemite, and came into her house, and entered his chamber where the dead child was, and closed the door, and prayed, and stretched himself seven times upon the lad, and at length the child's eyes opened. And Elisha called his servant Gehazi and said, "Call the Shunemite." So he called her. And when she came in he said, "Take up thy son!" Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son and went out.

At the foot of Carmel is a cave called the School of the Prophets, where young men are said to have been trained to the prophetic ministry. Centuries ago it was tenanted by a company of Carmelites, and a little chapel was built close by; but the monks were massacred by the Mohammedans, who took possession of it and have held it ever since. It is greatly revered both by Moslems and by Christians, and it is specially resorted to by mothers who desire to pray for their young children. There is a tradition that at or near the Grotto of the School of the Prophets the young Child Jesus and his Virgin Mother rested for a night when journeying home from Egypt to Nazareth.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE PLAIN OF ESDRAELON AND NAZARETH.

WE shall suppose the Holy Family to have taken the road which runs just south of Carmel at *Jokneam*, now called *Tel Keimum*, about twelve miles from the cape where the mountain juts into the sea. From the crest of the ridge they would see before them the great battlefield of Palestine, the Plain of Esdraelon. Esdraelon is the Graecized form of the Hebrew Jezreel; for just as the whole land has taken its name of Palestine from the Philistines who inhabited only a part of it, so the Plain of Esdraelon has taken its name from the little valley of Jezreel which lies to the north of Mount Gilboa and runs to the Jordan Valley. The plain is surrounded by hills and mountains. From Cape Carmel extends the ridge of Mount Carmel for twelve miles to the southwest; thence in the same general direction run the hills of Manasseh; on the south are the hills of Samaria; at the southeast rise the mountains of Gilboa; on the east is the hill of Moreh, which English writers commonly but incorrectly call Little Hermon; on the northeast is Mount Tabor; on the north lie the hills of Nazareth. Westward the plain is drained by the river or torrent of Kishon, which runs close by the foot of Carmel into the Bay of Acre where the Plain of Esdraelon opens into the maritime plain called the Plain of Akka;

and on the east there are two wadys or valleys, besides the valley of Jezreel, through which the water flows into the Jordan.

If we suppose the Holy Family to have caught their first view of the Plain of Esdraelon from the neighborhood of Jokneam, then about four miles to the northwest at a place now called *El-Harathiyeh* was the site of *Harosheth* of the Gentiles; a few miles to the southeast was the city of *Megiddo*, which has been identified by Dr. Robinson with *Lejjun*, and by Captain Conder with *Mujedda*; yet a little further to the southeast was *Taanach*, still known by the name of *Taanuk*; and almost at their feet flowed the Kishon, whose waters had run red with Canaanitish blood on that famous day when Deborah rose up as a mother in Israel and Barak smote the host of Sisera with a mighty slaughter. From his stronghold Harosheth, Jabin the Canaanitish king controlled the Plain of Esdraelon which was occupied by the tribe of Issachar, and by the opening of the Kishon he had easy access to his capital at Hazor, whence he could oppress the tribes of Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, which lay beyond the plain. The hand of Jabin was heavy on Israel. The fields of Esdraelon were forsaken; the highways were unused; the traveller made his way from place to place by solitary by-paths (Judg. v : 6); the fortunes of that portion of the country were low indeed when Deborah sent a ringing message to Barak, calling him to the deliverance of his people. First making her promise to go with him, Barak called the men of Zebulun and Naphtali to follow him; and went up to the broad summit of Mount Tabor with ten thousand men at his feet (Judg. iv). This little army was an ill match for

the host of Sisera, the general of Jabin's host, who marched quickly with his whole force, and with not less than nine hundred of those chariots of iron which had always been the terror of the Israelites, to a position between Megiddo and Taanach, having the Kishon in his front. On Mount Tabor however Barak was safe, since the chariots of Sisera were powerless against him there; but the battle must be fought in the plain below, and Deborah gave the signal for the onset. Barak marched boldly down from Tabor and across the plain, and as he attacked Sisera's right flank, Josephus says a tremendous storm of rain and hail came on and beat full in the faces of the enemy. The ground became all sodden with the falling water, embarrassing the horses of the Canaanites; the chariots stuck fast in the mire; the heathen host was thrown into complete confusion. The torrent of Kishon was swollen by the flood; the direct road to Harosheth was flooded. The Gentiles were caught in a *cul-de-sac*, hemmed in by the rushing torrent of the Kishon, and with Barak's gallant ten thousand pressing their rear. The defeat was overwhelming. Sisera himself escaped on foot from the scene of carnage, and fled across the plain and northward to the oak of Zaanaim, in the low land near Kedesh-naphtali. There he sought the solitary tent of Heber, a Kenite Bedouin, between whom and himself there was hospitality. The bond of Arab hospitality did not serve to save him. The nail of Jael, the wife of Heber, sank into his brain as he lay fast asleep and weary after that bloody day. "At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down; at her feet he bowed, he fell, where he bowed, there he fell down dead." In Harosheth, the mother of Sisera impatiently awaited the coming of the



son she was nevermore to see. She looked out through her lattice dreaming of victory. "Why is his chariot so long in coming?" she asked; "why tarry the wheels of his chariot? Have they not sped? Have they not divided the spoil?" No, they had not sped. Deborah and Barak were even then meditating the song which has made their names immortal, and its closing words of triumph over Sisera were these: "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord!" After that signal victory, "the land had rest forty years" (Judg. v : 31).

"History often repeats itself. Three thousand two hundred years had passed and gone," says Canon Tristram, "when that plain saw a similar battle between hosts almost as unequal in numbers if not in equipment, with an identical result. Little more than four miles to the northwest, we may detect a mound in the plain on the direct road to Nazareth, covered with ruins, and on the other side of it a small swamp, sometimes lake, the resort of wild fowl, where flocks of the stilted plover daintily step. The mound, with a few huts behind it clustered round a well, is known as *El Fuleh*, the Bean, and marks the site of the crusading castle of Faba, an important garrison of the Knights Templar, the foundations of which are still plainly visible. Round this spot, in the beginning of April, 1799, the Turks had collected a vast army—Mamelukes from Egypt, Janissaries from Damascus, regulars from Aleppo, with the whole Mohammedan population of Syria, and countless hordes of Arab cavalry, which even outnumbered the foot levies, from the whole east of Jordan and Northern Arabia—for the purpose of forcing Napoleon to raise the siege of Acre, then held by the aid of Sir Sydney Smith. The Turkish general was

in the same position as Sisera. He was compelled to camp in the plain, or at least to hold his cavalry there for the sake of water. The little handful of French held, like Barak, the hill country of the north; Junot held Mount Tabor and Nazareth; other detachments held Cana of Galilee and Safed, while Murat, with one thousand men, held the bridge across the Jordan, to intercept the enemy's communications. Kleber held the supreme command; and, mustering all his troops at Nazareth, marched as far as Fuleh to the attack. Here he was assailed by fifteen thousand cavalry, and as many infantry. Forming in squares, the French were soon behind ramparts of dead men and horses, till, after they had held their ground for six hours, Napoleon, who had been working his way with the besieging army from before Acre by the edge of the southern hills, came suddenly down from Taanach and Megiddo, and by his dashing charges decided the fate of the day. The Turkish cavalry was driven into the swamps of the head waters of the Kishon in which Sisera's chariots had stuck fast, and they then fled toward Mount Tabor and the Jordan by the route that Sisera's fugitives must have followed toward Harosheth; but finding Murat holding the bridge, endeavored to ford the swollen Jordan, in which numbers perished and the army, 'countless as the sands of the sea,' was utterly dispersed" (Pict. Pal. i : 270).

The next great triumph of the chosen people in the Plain of Esdraelon, after the defeat of Sisera, was that of Gideon against the Midianites, in which Israel was to learn that the Lord can save by many or by few as is best pleasing to Him. The Midianitish tribes of the eastern side of Jordan had long made incursions into the Plain

of Esdraelon, and had so established themselves that when the Israelites had raised and reaped their harvests these marauders came and carried off the fruits of their toil. It was a just reward of the unfaithfulness of Israel, for their land had been polluted with idols and the altars of Baal were reared on the high places of Israel. Even on the lot of Gideon's own inheritance stood an altar of the false god, which at God's command he tore down, and to him was committed the high task of rescuing the Israelites from the Midianites. Over and over again, knowing the peril of his undertaking, Gideon asked from God a sign that it was verily God who called him, and the sign was given him as he asked for it. At length, with two and thirty thousand men, Gideon encamped upon the northern slope of Mount Gilboa; the Midianites and Amalekites, with their chiefs, Oreb, the Raven, and Zeeb, the Wolf, and under their greatest chiefs, Zeba and Zalmunna, encamped beside the hill of Moreh, in the valley. These warriors and the "children of the east," by whom they were accompanied, "lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand of the sea for multitude." In spite of the disparity of numbers, Gideon gave the word for every man who was afraid to turn and leave the host of Israel, and two and twenty thousand cowards took him at his word. Then, by command of God, the remainder marched down to the spring of Jezreel, and there the eager, thirsty throng rushed to the water in unsoldierly disorder, threw themselves upon their faces and drank like dogs. Only three hundred men showed the cool self-poise of resolute warriors, drinking at their leisure, and by these three hundred Israel conquered. In the dead of night, Gideon

himself approached the camp of the enemy and made a personal reconnoissance. Then returning to his chosen three hundred, he armed them with trumpets and lamps concealed in earthen pitchers. In three divisions the three hundred fell upon the camp of Midian at different points, blowing their trumpets, breaking their pitchers, waving their flaming lamps, and shouting out their battle cry, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" The Midianites were completely surprised; they supposed themselves to be surrounded by the army of Israel; in the darkness and confusion, they turned their swords against each other, and presently betook themselves to flight. All Israel joined in hot pursuit, the Midianites were routed out of every place they had occupied, and the land again had rest.

Israel was afterward to see a sadder sight on Mount Gilboa. The Philistines had gathered strength, and leaving their own plain by the sea had pressed the God-forsaken Saul back through the Plain of Esdraelon. Their tents were pitched at Shunem; Saul's camp was at Mount Gilboa. But Saul's hope and energy were gone. He knew that God had left him. Samuel was dead, and he had no prophet of God to consult. The hapless king then sought out a witch with a familiar spirit. She was found at En-Dor, a village situated on the other side of Little Hermon about eight miles from Saul's camp and reputed to be the place where Sisera had perished (Psalms lxxxiii : 9, 10). Thither in disguise Saul went by night, and at his desire the woman called the shade of Samuel to meet the king who had so often disobeyed his counsels. "Why," the prophet asked, "Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?" Saul, with his face bowed

to the ground, mournfully answered, "I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do." And then he heard his doom sternly and solemnly pronounced: "To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me; the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines." At this announcement of irretrievable defeat and death, Saul seems to have fainted. He was worn out with anxiety; all day he had eaten nothing; now all hope was taken from him. His followers compelled him to eat what was perhaps his last meal, and immediately that night they went away.

Next day the prophet's saying was fulfilled. Saul's sons died before him in the battle; he himself was wounded by the archers of the Philistines. One last disgrace he would not brook; he would not die by the hands of his uncircumcised enemies. He besought his armor-bearer to kill him, but the armor-bearer would not slay the Lord's anointed. Then Saul fell upon his own sword, and his faithful armor-bearer fell likewise upon his sword and died with him. On the following day the bodies of Saul and his sons,—among them that of David's beloved friend Jonathan,—were found by the Philistines. Saul's armor was sent as a trophy to the temple of Ash-taroth. His body and the bodies of his sons were gibbeted outside the walls of Beth-shan (afterward Scythopolis, now Beisan) in the Plain of Jezreel; but that disgrace the brave men of Mount Gilead could not bear. They went to Beth-shan, took down the mutilated bodies and gave them honorable sepulture. Then it was that

David's generous muse inspired the tender strains of his lament for Saul and Jonathan. "The beauty of Israel," he sang, "is slain upon the high places, O ye mountains of Gilboa! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives and in their death they were not divided. Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you with scarlet, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been to me; thy love was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!"

Another terrible defeat befell Israel in the Plain of Esdraelon, and its scene was that of the former great victory of Barak over Sisera. Pharaoh Necho, King of Egypt, in his march against Assyria had come along the coast through the Plains of Philistia and Sharon, and had rounded the Cape of Carmel when the good King Josiah unadvisedly attacked him. Pharaoh had no wish to make war on Josiah, though he had taken leave to march through his dominions; but Josiah forced a battle at Megiddo, and hoping to meet Pharaoh hand to hand in the contest he disguised himself and entered the fray. He was mortally wounded by an arrow, at a place called Hadad Rimmon, and lived only till he reached Jerusalem, where he died the most lamented of the kings of Judah. From the blow received in that fatal battle his kingdom never rallied; and ere long it fell, a helpless prey, into the hands of the Assyrians (2 Kings xxiii : 29, 30; 2 Chron. xxxv : 20-24).

Prophetic commentators have imagined that a greater battle than all these is yet to be fought on that historic field. For "*Armageddon*" (Rev. xvi : 16) is nothing else than "*the field of Megiddo*" which has already been a place of so much slaughter. It is rash to undertake to tell the meaning of unfulfilled prophecies ; no prophecy is of private interpretation ; and the Galilean writer of the Apocalypse, accustomed to behold that scene of bloodshed, might very naturally use its name in a figurative way to designate the place of any mighty contest, temporal or spiritual.

It is well worth while to visit in imagination the conspicuous places of the Plain of Esdraelon ; for beyond a doubt they were familiar to our Saviour's eye throughout his early years, and it is certain that He not only saw all of them, but visited some of them in the course of his ministry. *En-Gannim*, for example (the modern Jenin), He must often have passed through, since it is on the straight road into or out of Samaria, and it was either at or near En-Gannim that He healed the ten lepers, of whom but one returned to tell his gratitude (Luke xvii : 11-20). Its name signifies the Spring or Fountain of Gardens, and indicates its former beauty and fertility. It stands on the slope which descends to the Plain of Esdraelon from the hills of Samaria, and its full perennial spring supplies abundant water for the irrigation of its fields and gardens. It belonged to the tribe of Issachar, but was given, as a Levitical city, to the family of Gershon. In history it is somewhat doubtfully recognized as the place where Ahaziah, King of Judah, was wounded to death by Jehu. He fled, we are told (2 Kings ix : 27, 28), by the way of Beth-Gan, or the House of the

Garden (which some commentators suppose to have been En-Gannim), and reached Megiddo, where he died. En-Gannim is now a town of some twenty-five hundred inhabitants, who are all said to be fanatical, rude and rebellious Moslems, with the exception of a few families of Christians of the Greek Church.

The bare and barren mountain ridge of Gilboa has been thought, idly and foolishly, to be blighted by the poetical apostrophe of David in his lament for Jonathan: "Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings; for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil!" Physical nature is not blighted by the curses of poets or prophets. Poetry is imaginative and figurative; prophecy is spiritual and its fulfillment is spiritual, it is not fulfilled in physical abortions or desolations except so far as spiritual facts accomplish physical results. Mount Gilboa is naturally barren, but it has not been made so by the curse of David. The dew falls and the rain still descends upon it as on all the land. No part of the land is physically cursed; the soil is rich and ready to bring forth seed for the sower and bread for the eater. Under a good government to make property secure, and with ordinary diligence to use the great physical advantages which are everywhere present, the Plain of Esdraelon might become one universal garden. Travellers are struck with its extreme fertility; the exuberant crops produced on the few cultivated spots show what the rest might be with proper culture. So rich was it in ancient times that the tribe of Issachar was willing to submit to pay continual tribute to the fierce marauders of the



desert, rather than abandon its pleasant land. "He saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant, and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute, couching down, like a strong ass under two burdens" (Gen. xlix : 14, 15). In time, it seems to be certain that this plain will bear more abundantly than ever; but Mount Gilboa will always be barren, as it always has been, and the curse of David's song will not have caused its barrenness.

But a little way from the northeastern end of Mount Gilboa, and not far from the spring of Jezreel, where the thirsty soldiers of Gideon had thrown themselves on their faces to drink, was established many years afterward the splendid capital of the magnificent Ahab, which rivalled the original capital at Samaria. It was in all respects superbly situated, surrounded with fertile plains which extended from the Jordan on the east to the Mediterranean on the west, and from En-Gannim on the south to Nazareth on the north. In the time of war it had been proved to be so strongly defensible as to have interposed a barrier to the conquest of the land by Joshua (Josh. xvii : 16). Ahab was a man of great magnificence; not incorrigibly bad, but misled by ambition and seduced by the unscrupulous savagery of his heathen wife Jezebel. It was for the sake of completing or enlarging the gardens surrounding his palace that Jezebel committed the atrocious crime of putting Naboth to death under a perjured accusation (1 Kings xxi : 1-16). A grove sacred to Baal was served by a staff of idolatrous priests (1 Kings xvi : 33; 2 Kings x : 11), and high above all was the watch tower, from which the whole plain could be seen (2 Kings ix : 17). Jezreel, in the

time of Ahab, was a place of great luxury and magnificence. It had a winter palace and a summer palace, one of which was called "the palace of ivory" (1 Kings xxii : 39), and mansions so magnificent as to be called "houses of ivory" (Amos iii : 15). But the day of vengeance was at hand, though Ahab's penitence secured a respite. At the indignant rebuke and the fearful doom pronounced against him by Elijah, the terror-stricken king "rent his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly" (1 Kings xxi : 27); and because he humbled himself, retribution was delayed. When he fell in battle at Ramoth Gilead beyond the Jordan, his son Ahaziah followed in his evil ways and did not repent. It was he who sent to consult Beelzebub at the Philistine temple in Ekron, and whose death Elijah foretold. He was followed by Joram, an unworthy son of an unworthy father, and then came Jehu, the Avenger. Joram had been wounded in battle with Hazael, King of Syria, and had gone to his palace at Jezreel to recover his health, when Jehu was anointed, by a messenger of Elijah, to punish the evil house of Ahab, and to found a new dynasty in the kingdom of Israel. At Samaria he raised the standard of revolt, and was proclaimed king so suddenly that before the news could be carried to Jezreel Jehu himself was there. From the height of the watch tower the watchman spied an armed force approaching Jezreel. Messenger after messenger was sent to inquire whether the strangers came on an errand of peace, but Jehu detained them and marched swiftly on. At length, by the furious driving of the chariots, Joram perceived that it was Jehu who approached, and at once, with his guest Ahaziah, King





of Judah, he went out to meet the enemy. He asked, "Is it peace, Jehu?" and for answer was told that there could be no peace so long as his mother lived. Joram, hearing this answer, turned and fled, and an arrow from Jehu's bow killed him. King Ahaziah also fled, either by the "garden house" or by the way of En-Gannim, where he too was mortally wounded and died at Megiddo. Meanwhile Jezebel was preparing to meet Jehu. She was a woman of undaunted courage, and met her foeman with scorn. While he had been slaughtering Joram and Ahaziah, she had caused her tirewomen to paint her face and adorn her head; and when he entered Jezreel, she looked out at a window and taunted him with the fate of another traitor, Zimri, who had murdered his sovereign. "Had Zimri peace," she asked, "who slew his master?" Jehu made no reply. "Cast her down," he called to some of her servants who stood near the queen. They cast her down; the horses trod her under foot, and so they left her dead in the street. When they returned to bury her, they found that her carcass had been eaten by the dogs of Jezreel, thus fulfilling to the letter the prophecy of Elijah that dogs should eat the flesh of that cruel queen in "the portion of Jezreel" (2 Kings ix). Of all the splendor of Ahab's city of royal pleasure, nothing now remains except a rude village called Zerin, heaps of ruins which bear witness of its former greatness, and a tower which is used by travellers as a khan.

A little to the north of Jezreel is the Hill of Moreh, *Jebel Duhy*, commonly called Little Hermon, through a misunderstanding of two passages in the Psalms (Psalms xlii : 6; cxxxiii : 12). At the foot of Little Hermon

was Shunem, now *Solane* ; on the northeast *En-Dor* ; and nestling on the northwest slope was the little city of *Nain*, "the Fair," sacred forever to all Christians and still known by the same name, which is justified by its lovely situation though it is now only a squalid village.

Here we may anticipate by thirty years the one event which makes Nain so sacredly illustrious. The Holy Child, whose footsteps we are tracing, had become a man, had begun His ministry, and journeying from Capernaum He came to Nain, followed by His chosen companions. As He approached the city gate, He met a numerous and sorrowful procession. A young man was being carried to his grave beyond the gate. The wailing cries of the mourning women might well be, and perhaps they were, more sincerely uttered than they usually were on such occasions, for the dead man "was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." To be childless was held to be the saddest fate that could befall a woman of Israel, it was even thought to be a special punishment of sin, so that this widow was more desolate than mothers in our time might be in even such a loss. Her grief had moved the hearts of many of her neighbors, for "much people followed the bier." When the Saviour saw her, He too was moved with compassion, and perhaps He thought of what the gentle Prophet Elisha had done on the other side of that same mountain for his kind hostess of Shunem. So He came and touched the bier, a most unusual act, for according to the Jewish law to touch the bier of a dead body was to be defiled. To Jesus there was no defilement, for He meant to change the bed of death into a chariot of deathless triumph. At His touch the bearers of the dead stood still, and then

Jesus simply said : " Young man, I say unto thee, Arise !" And he that was dead sat up and began to speak, and Jesus delivered him to his mother. This was the first of those marvellous " signs " by which our Saviour declared Himself to be " the Resurrection and the Life."

About ten miles north of Little Hermon is Mount Tabor, now called *Jebel el Tur*, or Mountain of Purity, which the Hebrew poets delighted to compare with the noble head of Carmel at the other end of the plain. Thus Jeremiah (xlvi : 18) puts this striking language into the mouth of God Himself : " As I live, saith the King, Whose Name is the Lord of Hosts, surely as Tabor is among the mountains, and as Carmel is by the sea, so shall He come !" Dean Stanley, speaking of these two mountains, gives a fine description of Tabor. He says : " Two mountains, the glory of the tribe of Issachar, stand out among the bare and rugged hills of Palestine, and even among those of their own immediate neighborhood, remarkable for the verdure which climbs—a rare sight in eastern scenery—to their very summits. One of these is Tabor. This strange and beautiful mountain is distinguished alike in form and in character from all around it. As seen, where it is usually first seen by the traveller, from the northwest of the plain, it towers like a dome—as seen from the east, like a long-arched mound—over the monotonous undulations of the surrounding hills, from which it stands completely isolated, except by a narrow neck of rising ground, uniting it to the mountain range of Galilee. It is not what Europeans would call a wooded hill, because its trees stand all apart from each other. But it is so thickly studded with them as to rise from the plain like a mass of verdure." Mount Tabor

has been supposed to be the scene of our Lord's transfiguration, but we shall hereafter see that the true place of that event was far distant. The mountain however appears to have been regarded as a sacred place for many ages, and it is probably "the mountain" (Deut. xxxiii : 19) of the prediction to which Issachar and Zebulon were to assemble to offer sacrifices.

All the places which have been named would be visible to the Holy Family from Jokneam, and when they had descended to the plain and turned toward the hills which bound the Plain of Esdraelon on the north, almost in the centre of that chain they would perceive a cleft in the limestone forming the entrance to a little valley. The view before them then would be precisely what the traveller has before him now, and we may let the pen of Archdeacon Farrar draw the scene. He says, "As the traveller leaves the plain he will ride up a steep and narrow pathway brodered with grass and flowers, through scenery which is neither colossal nor overwhelming but infinitely beautiful and picturesque. Beneath him, on the right hand side, the vale will gradually widen until it becomes about a quarter of a mile in breadth. The basin of the valley is divided by hedges of cactus into little fields and gardens, which, about the fall of the spring rains, wear an aspect of indescribable calm and glow with a tint of the richest green. Beside the narrow pathway, at no great distance apart from each other, are two wells ; and the women who draw water there are more beautiful, and the ruddy shepherd boys who sit or play by the well-sides in their gay-colored oriental costume are a happier, bolder, brighter-looking race than the traveller will have seen elsewhere. Gradually the valley opens



into a little natural amphitheatre of hills, supposed by some to be the crater of an extinct volcano; and there, clinging to the hollows of a hill which rises to the height of some five hundred feet above it, lie 'like a handful of pearls in a goblet of emerald' the flat roofs and narrow streets of a little eastern town. There is a small church; the massive buildings of a convent; the tall minaret of a mosque; a clear, abundant fountain; houses of white stone, and gardens scattered among them umbrageous with figs and olives and rich with the white and scarlet blossoms of orange and pomegranate. In spring at least, everything about the place looks indescribably bright and soft; doves murmur in the trees; the hoopoe flits about in ceaseless activity; the bright blue roller-bird, the commonest and loveliest bird of Palestine, flashes like a living sapphire over fields which are enameled with innumerable flowers. And that little town is *En Nazirah*, Nazareth, where the Son of God, the Saviour of Mankind, spent nearly thirty years of His mortal life. It was in fact His home, His native village, for all but three or four years of His life on earth; the village which lent its then ignominious name to the scornful title written upon His cross; the village from which He did not disdain to draw His appellation when He spake in vision to the persecuting Saul. And along the narrow mountain path which I have described His feet must often have trod, for it is the only approach by which in returning northward from Jerusalem He could have reached the home of His infancy, youth and manhood."

The "little natural amphitheatre," of which Archdeacon Farrar here speaks, must be somewhat more distinctly described. It is really encompassed by fifteen gently

rounded hills, which, as Dr. Richardson says, seem to have met to form an enclosure for this peaceful basin, rising around it like the edge of a shell to guard it from intrusion. It is a rich and beautiful field in the midst of the surrounding hills. Nazareth stands on the slope of one of these hills on the northwest. If we approach it from the south to-day, we see in front of us and on the right side a small mosque; and behind that the Latin Monastery and Church of the Annunciation, with its tall campanile or belfry. The Latin Quarter, however, would be on our left, and the Mohammedan Quarter would be beyond the monastery on the right; the Greek Quarter lies further up the hill, behind the other two. The principal mosque is in the centre of the Mohammedan Quarter. At the extreme left (the northwest angle) of the Latin Quarter, half-way up the hill, is the Maronite Church. At the extreme right of the Greek Quarter are the church and school of the Greek Christians and the residence of their Bishop. Behind all and above all is the English Protestant Orphan House, where orphan children of Nazareth and its vicinity are reared and educated for the sake of Him who was once a child in the streets of Nazareth.

None of these is of any historical importance; but if we should pass to the right of the Greek Bishop's house and walk on for, say, three or four minutes, we should find ourselves at a spot where undoubtedly the Blessed Virgin and her son stood many hundreds of times. That is the Fountain of the Virgin. To this spot the women of Nazareth resort for water, as they undoubtedly did when Jesus was a child. The path which leads to it has been trodden by the feet of countless generations, and in

its immediate vicinity is the gayest and busiest scene of the ancient town. The water of the Virgin's Spring bursts out of the ground within the Church of the Annunciation, and as the church itself is underground, the water is led past the high altar to a well which is kept full for the use of pilgrims, and thence by a conduit to an arched recess below the church on the hillside. There the stream flows in spouts through the wall into a square trough of stone, at which a dozen persons can stand side by side, and the overflow makes a pool immediately beneath where the women wash their linen and even their children, "standing in the water," as Dr. Clark says, "ankle deep, with their baggy trousers tucked between their knees, while others coming for water are continually passing and repassing with their jars on their heads."

Over the source of the spring, and not far above the Fountain of the Virgin, is the Greek Church and Monastery dedicated to Gabriel the Angel of the Annunciation, who was sent of God to announce to the young Virgin that she should bear a Son who should be called the Son of the Highest and whose human name she should call JESUS (Luke 1 : 26-31). Of course there is not a particle of historical evidence that the Angelic Annunciation took place at or near any particular spot. The fact of the Annunciation is all that Holy Scripture has recorded for our learning. The Greeks maintain that it took place near the Fountain of the Virgin, and the Latin monks as positively assert that it was in a cave under their church. The exact spot is pointed out, marked with the inscription, *Hic Verbum Caro Factum est*,—"Here the Word became flesh!"

We need spend no time in considering the legendary

localities of which there are more than enough at Nazareth. We will not linger in an old cistern called "the Kitchen of the Virgin," nor in "Joseph's workshop," nor beside the *Mensa Christa*, or "Table of Christ," a huge block of hard chalk on which our Saviour is said to have dined with his disciples; and certainly we need not discuss the story of the Holy House of Loretto, though it may be worth while to tell at least what that story is. It is affirmed that on the 10th day of May, A.D. 1291, when the house formerly occupied by the Blessed Virgin at Nazareth was in danger of being desecrated by the Mohammedans, it was lifted bodily from its foundations and was borne by the hands of angels through the air to Tersato, near Fiume, in Dalmatia. It was subsequently carried in the same way to Loretto, where it now stands. It was not until 1471 that the Church declared this marvellous story to be historically true; and it is needless to say that, though Protestants refuse to believe it, the Holy House of Mary at Loretto is still frequented by many devout Roman Catholic pilgrims.

Besides the Fountain of the Virgin, there is really only one spot in or near Nazareth of any special importance in connection with the gospel history, namely, that which has come to be customarily called the Hill of the Precipitation. It will be remembered (Luke iv: 16-29), that when our Saviour began to preach in the synagogue at Nazareth, his fellow-townsmen were so "filled with wrath" that they "rose up and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong." "From these words," says Stanley, "most readers imagine a town built on the *summit* of a mountain, from which

summit the intended precipitation was to take place. This, however, is not the situation of Nazareth, and yet the true position is strictly in accordance with the narrative. Nazareth is built upon a mountain, but on the side, not on the top of it; and the brow of the mountain is not below the city, but above it. There is a cliff about thirty or forty feet high, in the face of the limestone rock, not far from the Maronite Convent already mentioned, which would perfectly correspond with the account of the incident as given by St. Luke, and which is, in all probability, the true scene of the attempted precipitation." Standing in imagination on the spot of that scene of murderous excitement, one must needs marvel at the quietude of Christ, and at the triumph of peace over the tumult of his enemies. While the crowd swayed to and fro and sought to hurry him along to the intended place of murder, he was so calm and peaceful that they lost sight of him altogether; and then "passing through the midst of them, he went his way!"

There is little reason to wonder at the general disrepute of Nazareth in the time of our Saviour. It was not merely classed with other parts of Galilee on account of a rude provincial dialect, or the uncultivated manners of a peasant population; it was despised even by other Galileans; it was a Galilean who asked, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46). In the life of Jesus we have more than one incident which goes to prove the hostility of the Nazarenes at least to Him. They expelled Him twice from their city (Luke iv:16-29; Matt. xiii:56-58); once they sought to take His life; they were so unbelieving that He could do no miracles among them (Matt. xiii:58), and at last He was

compelled to quit the home of His childhood and His youth and to take up His abode in Capernaum (Matt. iv : 13). A people so unruly and violent in their treatment of One who had dwelt for many years among them was, in all probability, characterized by general rudeness and brutality of behavior, and hence the proverb, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

It would be unjust to one of the most sacred of all the places on earth if we were not to mention the grand scene which opens to the view from the summit of the hill of Nazareth. Perhaps one of the very best descriptions of it, given by any traveller, is that of Dr. Robinson. He says, "I walked out alone to the top of the hill over Nazareth, where stands the neglected Wely of Neby Ishma'il. Here, quite unexpectedly, a glorious prospect opened on the view. The air was perfectly clear and serene, and I shall never forget the impression I received as the enchanting panorama burst suddenly upon me. There lay the magnificent Plain of Esdraelon, or at least all its western part; on the left was seen the round top of Tabor over the intervening hills, with portions of the Little Hermon and Gilboa, and the opposite mountains of Samaria, from Zerin (Jezreel) westward to the lower hills, extending toward Carmel. Then came the long line of Carmel itself, with the Convent of Elias on its northern end, and Haifa on the shore at its feet.

"In the west lay the Mediterranean, gleaming in the morning sun; seen first, far in the south, on the left of Carmel; then interrupted by that mountain; and again appearing on its right, so as to include the whole Bay of Akka, and the coast stretching far north to a point north ten degrees west. Akka (Acre) was not visible, being

hidden by the intervening hills. Below on the north was spread out another of the beautiful plains of Northern Palestine, called El Buttauf; it runs from east to west, and its waters are drained off westward through a narrower valley to the Kishon at the base of Carmel.

“On the southern border of this plain the eye rested on a large village, near the foot of an isolated hill, with a ruined castle on the top; this was Seffurieh, the ancient Sepphoris, or Diocæsarea. Beyond the Plain of Buttauf long ridges, running from east to west, rise, one higher than another, until the Mountains of Safed overtop them all, on which that place is seen, ‘a city set upon a hill.’ Further toward the right is a sea of hills and mountains, backed by the higher ones beyond the Lake of Tiberias, and in the northeast by the majestic Hermon, with its icy crown.

“Seating myself in the shade of the wely, I remained for some hours upon this spot, lost in the contemplation of the wide prospect, and of the events connected with the scenes around. In the village below the Saviour of the world had passed His childhood; and although we have few particulars of His life during those early years, yet there are certain features of nature which meet our eyes now just as they once met His. He must often have visited the fountain near which we had pitched our tent; His feet must frequently have wandered over the adjacent hills; and His eyes, doubtless, have gazed upon the splendid prospect from this very spot.

“Here the Prince of Peace looked down upon the great plain where the din of battles so oft had rolled, and the garments of the warrior been dyed in blood; and he looked out too upon that sea over which the swift ships

were to bear the tidings of his salvation to nations and to continents then unknown. How has the moral aspect of things been changed! Battles and bloodshed have indeed not ceased to desolate this unhappy country, and gross darkness now covers the people; but from this region a light went forth which has enlightened the world and unveiled new climes; and now the rays of that light begin to be reflected back from distant isles and continents, to illuminate anew the darkened land where it first sprung up."

Returning into Nazareth, and observing that it is not more than a quarter of a mile in length, we conclude that even supposing it to have extended in ancient times further up the hill than it now does it can never have been much larger than now, nor can it have had a much larger population. At present the number of inhabitants is about 6000, of whom about 1000 are Latins, 2000 are Mohammedans, and the rest are Greeks. Excepting the comparatively broad market-place, which extends in a kind of an elbow almost through the city, the streets are only from six to ten feet in width; they are roughly paved, and have a gutter or sewer, which is seldom clean, running through the middle. The houses, like that of the "wise man" (Matt. xii: 24, 25; Luke vi: 48), are all founded on the rock. However deep the builder may be obliged to dig to reach it, no other foundation than the virgin rock contents the Nazarene. The craftsmen ply their several trades, always seated, if it be possible, either at their doors or in the street. Most of the old-fashioned tools are still in use; but in carpenters' shops the modern innovation of a work-bench has been introduced, so that the carpenter stands



at his work instead of sitting with his plank on his lap, as it is possible that Joseph the carpenter did nineteen hundred years ago. The dwellings, as elsewhere at the East, are not cumbered with much furniture. Without are sunshine and birds and vines upon the walls; within, along the walls are ranged the family utensils and water-jars and the mats or quilts which serve as shelves by day and as beds at night. From the low roof hangs a lamp, and somewhere at hand is a stool on which the tray bearing the family meal is set. This is the only dining-table; and when dinner is over, and the hands have been washed with water poured over them into a basin by one of the children, the remains of the simple meal of rice and meat, and fresh or stewed fruits, are quickly borne away.

If we would conceive the daily life of the Child Jesus at Nazareth, of which the evangelists have told us so little, we must conceive it to have been led in some such lowly, flat-roofed cottage of Nazareth, and in some such simple way as this. On the Sabbath day the Holy Family would doubtless wend their way through the narrow streets into the broader market-place, where on other days the children sat and played, or sang and piped and danced with each other (Matt. xi : 16, 17). On the Holy Day the more devout among the people would resort to the synagogue, which in all probability then stood, as it still does, beside the market and almost in the centre of the town. We know nothing of its former architecture, and it is beyond our purpose to describe the forms and customs of synagogue worship; but it was there that for thirty years of His life, while He was growing in wisdom and in stature (Luke ii : 52), Jesus worshipped every Sabbath day. There or near by He attended the school

of the synagogue, without which a Jewish town was held to be accursed. Josephus boasts of the zeal for education which his people exhibited. "We interest ourselves," he says, "more about the education of our children than about anything else. . . . If you ask a Jew any question concerning his law, he can explain it to you more readily than he can tell his own name. We learn it from the beginning of intelligence; it is graven, as it were, upon our souls."

No credence whatever is to be given to the stories of the infancy and youth of Christ which are narrated in the Apocryphal Gospels. They are destitute of all authority; they are mostly trivial; some of them are merely tales of oriental magic; some of them are clearly profane. The best of them is undoubtedly this: "In the month of Adar, Jesus assembled the boys (of Nazareth) as if He were their king. They strewed their garments on the ground, and He sat upon them. Then they put upon His head a crown, wreathed of flowers, and stood in order before Him, on His right hand and on His left, like courtiers waiting on a king. And whoever passed by, the boys took him by force, and cried, 'Come hither and worship the King, and then proceed on thy way.'" Very different from this innocent story, which might conceivably be true of any lad who was popular among his playmates, is the magical tale of his putting different garments into one and the same dyeing vat, and then withdrawing them dyed severally of different colors, as He chose that they should be; or that of His making birds of clay, with His companions, and then at a word causing them to fly off alive. Utterly repulsive and pernicious is that of His striking His playmates dead with

a curse when they offended Him, and thereby incurring such general hatred that His mother was compelled to keep Him at home.

Unspeakably more simple and sublime is the silence of the four evangelists, who tell us merely the name of the retired and lonely place of Christ's youth, and there leave Him in the hands of the appointed and holy pair, to whom He was "subject" (Luke ii : 51). To them, more than to all others, He owed whatever education He received; and we may not doubt that Mary, who had pondered in her heart (Luke ii : 19) so many marvellous and sacred things concerning Him, was His best teacher. There is no superstition in calling her, as the angel did, the "Blessed" Virgin; nor can we find fitter words to clothe our thoughts concerning her than those of the staunch Protestant poet, William Wordsworth, in his famous sonnet :

"Mother ! whose virgin bosom was uncrossed  
 With the least shade or thought to sin allied ;  
 Woman ! above all women glorified ;  
 Our tainted nature's solitary boast ;  
 Purer than foam on central ocean toss'd ;  
 Brighter than eastern skies at daybreak strewn  
 With fancied roses, than the unblemished moon,  
 Before her wane begins, on heav'n's blue coast ;  
 Thy image falls to earth. Yet some, I ween,  
 Not unforgiven, the suppliant knee might bend,  
 As to a visible Power, in whom did blend  
 All that was mix'd and reconciled in thee  
 Of mother's love with maiden purity,  
 Of high with low, celestial with terrene !"

In quietness and peace ; in home love and devout associations ; in the least frequented of the towns of Galilee ; amid the loveliest scenes of nature, which supplied

Him afterward with themes for many a parable; in full view of historic places, where the brave had battled, where the mightiest had fallen, and the awful messages of prophets had been borne from hill to hill and from vale to vale; leading a life of innocence and industry, and winning favor from both God and man; so were the childhood and youth of Jesus passed—we know nothing more concerning it. When the blossom was full-blown and ready to bear its predestined fruit, then “the Life was manifested.” Until then it bloomed in silence and seclusion, hidden on the hillside of Nazareth.

## CHAPTER VII.

### FROM NAZARETH TO BETHABARA.

WE may indulge our fancy to an unlimited extent in picturing to ourselves the daily course and the probable circumstances of the childhood of our Saviour; but it is remarkable how lightly the evangelists have passed over that interesting period of His life.

St. Matthew gives a rigidly circumstantial account of the Annunciation, incarnation and nativity of Jesus, tells of the murder of the Holy Innocents, relates in a few lines the bare fact of the flight into Egypt and of the return to Nazareth, and then without a word concerning the divine Child he passes over nearly thirty rich and fruitful years to the time when "came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa."

St. Mark begins his story with these words: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as it is written in the prophets. . . . The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Not one word of the birth, the childhood or the youth of Christ! St. Mark's first mention of our Saviour is when he tells of the coming of Jesus to John's baptism at thirty years of age.

St. John too wholly overlooks our Saviour's early

days on earth, and never hints that they were of the least significance. "In the beginning was the Word," he says; then he tells Who and What the Word was, and that It was made flesh and dwelt among us; and then, like St. Mark, he passes over everything else until the time when "there was a man sent from God whose name was John."

St. Luke has saved for us a single incident of all those hidden years. That is His journey to Jerusalem at twelve years of age.

It was the opinion of some of the Jewish rabbis that, before the age of twelve, children have only an animal life; that about that age they begin to have spiritual natures; and that if they live virtuously until the age of twenty, they then become possessed of reasonable souls. Whether or not this curious doctrine prevailed extensively, it is certain that the age of twelve years brought many privileges to the Jewish boy. He was no longer regarded or treated as a mere child; it was no longer in his father's power to sell him as a slave; he was allowed to wear the phylacteries of a grown man; he was publicly presented by his father in the synagogue as a true son of Israel; but above all, it was his duty and his happy privilege to join one of the companies of pilgrims which went every year to celebrate the passover at the Holy City. Our Saviour was "made under the law," and one object of St. Luke in recording this solitary incident in the child-life of Jesus may have been to show how early He began to set an example of obedience to the law to which He had submitted. But there may have been another reason for the record of this one event. These yearly journeys were not made for pleas-

ure only, nor only for the purpose of religious observance. To all, perhaps, but certainly to the young, they were of surpassing educational value.

It would be difficult to over-estimate the value of such a journey in forming the mind and warming the heart of a young Israelite. Throughout the year, it was sure to be the one event to which his memory looked back and his imagination forward. When the spring-time came and the family preparations had been made, the elders of the house would think, with mingled smiles and tears, of friends with whom their early journeys had been made, and they would talk of incidents that then befell when life was young and hopes were yet unblighted. But to the young such thoughts were yet far off, and it would be with swelling hearts that they would set their faces toward Jerusalem. Every day they would pass by the scene of some event famous in the history of Israel, and from day to day they would compute their progress to the Holy City. The elasticity of youth would make no reckoning of weariness or hardship when they knew that they were nearing Zion; and when, after days of travel, they at length stood on the crest of one of the surrounding hills and saw the glorious fabric of the temple crowning Mount Moriah, we may conceive the joy with which the young Jew would exclaim, "Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" No one would then think of weariness or hardship; not the young Jew certainly when he joined in singing the old song of the Pilgrim Psalmist, which was even then so many centuries old:

I was glad when they said unto me, We will go into the House of the Lord.

Our feet shall stand in thy gates, O Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity in itself.

For thither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord, to testify unto Israel, to give thanks unto the Name of the Lord.

For there is the seat of Judgment, even the seat of the house of David.

O pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee.

Peace be within thy walls, and plenteousness within thy palaces.

For thy brethren and companions' sakes I will wish thee prosperity.

Yea, because of the House of the Lord our God, I will seek to do thee good!

After that there would be days of rest and quiet, spent in the Holy City and its neighborhood in daily visits to the Temple and in the celebration of the Passover, which was of course the central purpose of their pilgrimage. The solemn grandeur of the vested priests attended by their train of surpliced Levites at the offering of the daily sacrifice, while the full procession of singing men proudly led the way chanting the Psalms of David; the majestic fabric of the Holy Temple, its broad courts, its lofty pinnacles, its smoking altars, its thronging multitudes of eager worshippers,—how solemn an impression must these sights and sounds have made upon the minds of peasants whose only glimpses of the beautiful in art and the magnificent in worship were enjoyed during these visits to the shrine of God! And when the last tones of the High Priest's chanted blessing died away on the last day of this delightful sojourn of the pilgrims from afar, surely the feelings of a pious Israelite might well be voiced in the regretful tenderness of the eighty-fourth psalm:

O, how amiable are Thy dwellings, Thou Lord of Hosts!

Blessed are they that *dwell* in Thy House; *they* will always be praising Thee.



One day in Thy courts is better than a thousand.

I had rather be a door-keeper in the House of my God, than to dwell in tents of ungodliness.

What though in after years the young Jew journeyed in distant lands and heard the old faith of his fathers sneered at, the cosmogony of Moses scouted, his chronology derided, the grand ceremonies of his worship ridiculed, the Psalms of David parodied, the predictions of the prophets coldly disproved? Nay, suppose the worst; suppose his own mind to have become unsettled, so that he himself came to believe but little of the faith in which he had been reared;—still, in every best hour of his life the heart would speak the language of his youth. His brain might go wrong a thousand times; but whenever his heart bounded in gladness or sank down in gloom, it must have turned to those scenes of his earlier and better years where all the music of his life received its key. Then very often, we may well believe, the wrong head would yield to the enlightened heart, for it is with the heart after all, and above all, that a man believeth unto righteousness; and then again one of the pilgrim songs would come back to him:

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help.

My help cometh even from the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth.

But in thinking of the purpose of the yearly journey to Jerusalem we have almost lost sight of its beginning. Returning then to Nazareth, we may ask by what route the pilgrim band would journey to the Holy City? The shortest road of course would lie straight across the Plain of Esdraelon to En-Gannim, and thence through

Samaria and Judea to Jerusalem ; but it is very doubtful whether this route was ever taken by pilgrims. There was deadly hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans in our Lord's time, and the sight of thousands of pilgrims marching to the ceremonies of a rival religion would be likely to excite angry and even murderous feelings in the Samaritans. Not much more than fifty years after the journey we are now seeking to trace, a band of pilgrims from Galilee which did attempt to pass through Samaria was slaughtered at En-Gannim by the infuriated Samaritans. This would hardly have happened if it had been customary for the Galilean pilgrims to take that road to Jerusalem. Another route across the Plain of Esdraelon to Jokneam, and thence along the Plain of Sharon to Antipatris or Lydda, would bring them to a high road to Jerusalem ; but, unless for some particular reason, so circuitous a route would hardly be chosen. The most natural and easy road would consequently be to the river Jordan, travelling on the other side of the river until they had passed the southern boundary of Samaria, and then continuing their journey on either side until they came to the Plain of Jordan properly so-called, when they would turn westward by Jericho to Jerusalem. This route, therefore, we may assume to have been taken.

But at what point would they reach and cross over the Jordan ? The nearest and most direct way would be to go down from their native hills into the Plain of Esdraelon, and march southward past the little town of Shunem and the site of royal Jezreel, and the spring of Harod where Gideon's thirsty warriors lapped the water like dogs ; thence, with Mount Gilboa on the right, through the Plain of Jezreel and the city of Beth-shean where

the bodies of Saul and his sons were gibbeted by the Philistines, and so at last to the Jordan.

We know of only three places where there was a passage over the Ghor, or sunken plain and river of Jordan. One of these was about six miles south of the Sea of Galilee, not far from the Hieromax, now called the *Yarmuk*, one of the eastern tributaries of the Jordan. If the pilgrims took the road on the north of Mount Tabor to that place, where an old Saracenic bridge still marks the ancient crossing, they would find themselves among historic scenes. It was there, in all probability, that David crossed to invade Syria (2 Sam. x : 17); there that the gallant caravan of Naaman would cross in his journey to Samaria, when the little captive maid out of the land of Israel had told him where he might be healed of his leprosy; perhaps it was somewhere near the same spot that "he dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God, and his flesh came again like the flesh of a little child" (2 Kings v : 14); and perhaps it was at this same ford that the terror-stricken army of Ben-hadad, King of Syria, sought to escape in its panic flight from Samaria (2 Kings vii : 15).

Somewhere between Beth-shean and the river Jabbok there was a great ford of the Jordan at Beth-barah, the *House of Passage*, or *House of the Ford*, where the men of Ephraim gathered to intercept the fugitive Midianites after Gideon's victory (Judg. vii. : 24), where the Ephraimites were afterwards slaughtered by their countrymen of Mount Gilead (Judg. xii : 6), and where Judas Maccabeus crossed from the sack of Ephron (1 Macc. v : 52). We must not, however, confound this Beth-

barah with Bethabara, where John the Baptist came preaching repentance, and baptizing men for the remission of sins (John i : 28). Bethabara appears to have been easily accessible from Judea, and must therefore, in all probability, have been much further south than Beth-barah, perhaps at the lowest ford of the Jordan near Jericho.

A little south of the Sea of Galilee the Saviour probably caught His first glance of the "narrow stream" of Jordan, a river so small that from its source at Banias to its entrance into the Dead Sea it makes but one hundred and four miles of actual distance ; which is not navigable ; which has been only an obstruction and in no way a help to commerce ; on the banks of which no city of importance ever stood ; and which is yet perhaps the most famous of all the rivers of the earth. Geologically speaking, the narrow valley through which it runs, and which in many places is a gorge rather than a valley, is simply a great rent or rift in the earth's surface, caused by the subsidence of a part of the earth's crust toward the centre. As said before, the Dead Sea, into which it flows, at one time extended much further north than it does now. Half-way between its present northern shore and the sea of Galilee, and four hundred feet above its present level, its former beach is still to be seen, and the earth is there so impregnated with salt as to make vegetation impossible ; about two hundred feet lower a second beach is found, marking another later level ; and still a hundred feet above the river a third beach marks a third stage in the subsidence of the Dead Sea. At the bottom of the Ghor the river has worn for itself two channels, the older being flat and comparatively broad, and the

more recent, which lies within the older, being about 100 feet in width, and enclosed between banks, or bluffs, of clayey soil about 50 feet high. On each side of the lower channel, vegetation is dense and rank; elsewhere, except at occasional oases, the Jordan Valley is barren. Hardly any of it can ever have been cultivated. On the eastern side of Lake Huleh (The Waters of Merom), Dr. Robinson found the land tilled down to the borders of the lake, and large crops of wheat, maize, barley, sesame and rice rewarded the labor of the husbandman. Horses, sheep and cattle fattened on the rich pastures, and herds of black buffaloes, doubtless descended from the "fat Bulls of Bashan," wallowed in the mire of the marshes. Lower down there were only occasional patches of grain, and the people who had sown them lived at a distance from their fields. From the Sea of Galilee downward to the Plain of Jordan the river, as Dean Stanley says, is the river of a desert. Within the narrow range of its own bed it produces a rank mass of vegetation which makes only a more striking contrast with the desolation beyond. This is caused by the depression of the valley, averaging 1000 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. The waters of the river cannot escape to fertilize the surrounding land, and the tropical heat, while it calls out into extraordinary luxuriance whatever vegetation the water does touch, parches and withers up every particle of verdure that appears beyond its reach.

The fall of the Jordan is so rapid as to justly entitle it to its name, which signifies the Descender. Its scenery is often beautiful, but seldom grand. Only once, so far as we know, have boats floated on its waters

from the sea of Galilee to the mouth. Lieutenant Lynch eloquently describes that expedition :

“The boats had little need to propel them, for the current carried us along at the rate of from four to six knots an hour; the river, from its eccentric course, scarcely permitting a correct sketch of its topography to be taken. It turned and twisted north, south, east and west, turning in the short space of half an hour to every quarter of the compass. . . . For hours, in their swift descent, the boats floated down in silence, the silence of the wilderness. Here and there were spots of solemn beauty. The numerous birds sang with a music strange and manifold; the willow branches floated from the trees like tresses, and creeping mosses and clambering weeds, with a multitude of white and silvery little flowers, looked out from among them; and the cliff swallow wheeled over the falls, or went at his own wild will, darting through the arched vistas, shadowed and shaped by the meeting foliage on the banks; and above all, yet attuned to all, was the music of the river, gushing with a sound like that of shawms and cymbals. . . .

“The stream sometimes washed the bases of the sandy hills, and at other times meandered between low banks, generally fringed with trees and fragrant with blossoms. Some points presented views exceedingly picturesque—the mad rushing of a mountain torrent, the song and sight of birds, the overhanging foliage, glimpses of the mountains far over the plain, and here and there a gurgling rivulet pouring its tribute of crystal water into the low and muddy Jordan. The western shore was peculiar from the high limestone hills, while the left or eastern bank was low and fringed with tamarisk and willow, and

occasionally a thicket of lofty cane and tangled masses of shrubs and creeping plants, giving it the character of a jungle. At one place we saw the fresh marks of a tiger (leopard) on the low clayey margin where he had come to drink. At another time, as we passed his lair, a wild boar started with a savage grunt and dashed into the thicket, but for some moments we tracked his pathway by the bending canes and the crashing sound of broken branches.

“The birds were numerous, and at times, when we issued from the silence and shadow of a narrow and verdure-tinted part of the stream into an open bend where the rapids rattled, and the light burst in, and the birds sang their wild-wood song, it was, to use a simile of Mr. Bedlow, like a sudden transition from the cold, dull-lighted hall, where the gentlemen hang their hats, into the white and golden saloon where the music rings and the dance goes on. The hawk upon the topmost branch of a blighted tree moved not at our approach, and the veritable nightingale ceased not her song, for she made day into night in her covert among the leaves; and the bulbul, whose sacred haunts we disturbed when the current swept us among the overhanging boughs, but chirruped her surprise, calmly winged her flight to another sprig, and continued her interrupted melodies.

“Our course down the stream was with varied rapidity. At times we were going at from three to four knots an hour, and again we would be swept and hurried away, dashing and whirling onward with the furious speed of a torrent. At such moments there was excitement, for we knew not but that the next turn of the stream would plunge us down some fearful cataract, or dash us on the

sharp rocks which might lurk beneath the surface. Many islands—some fairy-like and covered with a luxuriant vegetation, others mere sand-banks and sedimentary deposits—intercepted the course of the river, but were beautiful features in the monotony of the shores. The regular and almost unvaried scene, of high banks and alluvial deposit and sand-hills on the one hand, and the low shore covered to the water's edge with tamarisk, the willow and the thick, high cane, would have been fatiguing, but for the frequent occurrence of sand-banks and verdant islands. High up on the sand-bluffs, the cliff-swallow chattered from her nest in the hollow, or darted about in the bright sunshine in pursuit of the gnat and the water-fly."

Such as Lieutenant Lynch here describes the Jordan to be, such it was in the time of Christ. Along the banks are thickets of tamarisk, acacia, silver poplar, willow, terebinth, cedar, laurestinus, arbutus, oleander, pistachio and many other trees, with rich vegetation, and tall reeds rising and waving in the breeze to a height of ten or twelve feet. The birds are numerous and vocal, many of the song birds of England being heard on the banks of the Jordan. There are flocks of cranes and wild ducks; in some spots sparrows are present in countless numbers; but the more striking feathered inhabitants of the valley are the nightingale, the bulbul, the beautiful wur-wur, or bee-eater, the turtle-dove in great abundance, the cliff-swallow, and, back from the valley, flocks of partridges, from which a city, Beth-Hogla, the House (or Haunt) of the Partridge, once took its name. In the rank and reedy jungles the lion's roar was formerly heard; even in the time of the



Crusades the king of beasts was still to be found there, but it is now extinct, though the bones are still sometimes discovered. The bear, too, has disappeared. Of all the animals which are dangerous to man, only the leopard and the wild boar remain. Of smaller creatures, the most curious is the jerboa, a miniature kangaroo in appearance, with a body only six or seven inches long, and with a merely rudimentary fore-foot. By way of compensation, its hind legs are as long as its body, and with the aid of these, and a tail longer, it makes prodigious springs or leaps, and seems almost to fly at the approach of danger. Distinguished among the lesser animals of this region, by mention in Scripture, is the coney, which is found chiefly on the east side of the Dead Sea. It lives gregariously in natural clefts of the rocks, and anatomically this little animal, which is about the size of a common rabbit, is said by naturalists to belong to a genus midway between the hippopotamus and the rhinoceros! It is exceedingly shy and difficult to catch. The coneys are "but a feeble folk," and "little upon the earth," but they are "exceeding wise," and when startled they find a "refuge in the rocks" (Prov. xxx : 24, 26; Psalms civ : 18). It is a curious thing that the Israelites were forbidden to eat the flesh of the coney, on the ground that it chews the cud but does not divide the hoof (Deut. xiv : 7), whereas the fact is that the coney does not chew the cud. The Hebrews, who were not naturalists, were deceived by the peculiar motion made by the coney in chewing its food, which is exactly like the motion of the jaws made by ruminating animals.

The wild creatures which have their habitations on the banks of the Jordan are frequently driven out by the

“swelling” of the river, when the stream is filled by the melted snows from Lebanon. But this is not what is meant by the Prophet Jeremiah, when he says (Jer. xlix : 19 ; l : 44): “Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan against the habitation of the strong.” In these passages the Revised Version properly translates the word “swelling” by *pride*; and the prophet is borrowing the image of a lion which “is come up from his thicket” and “hath forsaken his covert” (Jer. iv : 7 ; xxv : 38) to attack the sheep in the pastures of the higher lands. The thick jungle by the river side, where the lion made his lair, was the “pride” or “glory” of the Jordan, which the Authorized Version improperly translates “the swelling of Jordan.”

After crossing the Jordan the pilgrims would march southward, with the river on their right and Mount Gilead on the left. The name “Mount Gilead,” like the name “Mount Lebanon,” does not properly designate a single peak, but a mountainous region. The word signifies a hard or rocky country, nothing more; and though one peak, about half a dozen miles south of the Jabbok, has been more particularly called by the name of Mount Gilead, yet the same designation properly applies to a large scope of mountainous territory extending very nearly from the southern line of the Sea of Galilee to the northern line of the Dead Sea. Its western boundary is of course the Jordan; but its eastern limit can be only indefinitely said to be where the mountains of Gilead melt away into the plateau of Arabia. The average height of Mount Gilead is about 3000 feet; but from the Ghor, which averages about 1000 feet below sea-level, Gilead appears much higher. From a distance it

seems bleak and barren ; but on ascending it, the summit is found to be a rich and picturesque table land, "tossed about in wild confusion of undulating downs, clothed with rich grass throughout, and in the northern parts with magnificent forests of sycamore, beech, terebinth, ilex, and enormous fig trees." From a point somewhat north of the Jabbok, Mr. Palmer says, "is the finest view that I ever saw in any part of the world." From that point are distinctly visible Lebanon, the Sea of Galilee, Esdraelon in its full extent, Carmel, the Mediterranean, and the whole range of Judah and Ephraim. "This view," says Dean Stanley, "must have been the very prospect which presented itself to the eyes, first of Abraham, and then of Jacob, as they descended from these summits on their way from Mesopotamia ; it must have been substantially the same as that which was unfolded before the eyes of Balaam and Moses ; and it is, in all probability, the view which furnished the framework of the vision of 'all the kingdoms of the world' which was revealed in a moment of time to Him Who was driven up from the valley below to these mountains at the opening of His public ministry."

Somewhere in Mount Gilead, but at a spot which cannot now be identified, Jacob took his last farewell of his crafty father-in-law, Laban ; and the parting was made an occasion for one of those word-plays in which the orientals delight. According to the custom of their time, Laban and Jacob reared a heap of stones, in witness of their covenant of amity, and called it Mizpah, or the watch-tower, for Laban said, "The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent, one from another." Then, referring to the heap, and playing on the old name

of the country, he said: "This *Gal* (the Hebrew for *heap*) is *Ed* (witness) between me and thee this day; therefore was the name of it called Galeed."

In the time of Moses the southern part of Gilead was held by Sihon, King of the Amorites; the northern by Og, King of Bashan; and their domains were probably separated by the river Jabbok. After the defeat of these two kings, the tribes of Reuben and Gad, which had "a very great multitude of cattle," were attracted by the rich pastures of Gilead, its copious streams of water, and its forests of trees, and chose to have their portion on that side of Jordan. The other tribes went on over Jordan to a region which now, at least, is far less desirable. Rich in their flocks and herds, the two tribes continued much the same mode of life as they had lived before. Reuben became more and more like the wild tribes of the desert. His men were few, for the English version has added to the blessing of the patriarch a "not" which is found in the Septuagint but is not in the Hebrew. He continued to dwell among the sheepfolds and the bleatings of the flocks; and he was barely able to maintain his tribal integrity among his brethren. Gad became a marauder, like his Arab neighbors; first becoming a victim of plunder, and then himself plundering at last (Gen. xlix : 19). But if these two tribes had the faults and weaknesses of their Arab kinsmen and neighbors, they had also their grand virtue of hospitality. In their tents the fugitive might always find a refuge. In Gilead the son of the ill-fated Saul took shelter when he sought to re-establish the rule of his royal house (2 Sam. ii : 8). There, too, in his turn, David found sanctuary when he was forced to flee from the unnatural rebellion of Absalom

(2 Sam. xvii : 24), and the men of Gilead hospitably brought him all manner of supplies ; “ for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness ” (2 Sam. xvii : 29). There, shortly afterward, the great battle was fought in which Absalom met his death under one of the mighty “ oaks of Bashan ; ” and his army was so scattered that, in poetic language, the wood is said to have “ devoured more people than the sword devoured. ” By some one of the refugees who sought hospitality in Gilead, and perhaps by David himself, the forty-second Psalm was written ; for even in the pleasant land of Gilead the exile longed for the home which was ever in his heart and ever before his eyes. Nor can we forget that Elisha the Tishbite was a man of Gilead (1 Kings xvii : 1), and perhaps it was the rough, wild life of his native mountains that fostered the brave independence which made kings’ threats powerless to daunt him. Perhaps, too, it was the rough clothing of the herdsman and the unkempt hair and beard of the border Arab that made Elijah so obnoxious to the cruel but dainty Jezebel. A courtier-like prelate might possibly have won Jezebel’s good graces ; but the “ lord of hair ” from Mount Gilead could only repel her and arouse her hatred.

We have more than one sad story of Mount Gilead, but there is one sadder than all the rest. Jephthah, Judge of Israel, was a Gileadite, son of a man named Gilead and a foreign concubine (Judges xi : 1). Driven after his father’s death from all share in the inheritance, he betook himself to the desert and there waged the wars of a freebooter as was then deemed to be proper for a gallant man. His fame as a warrior was soon reported to his kinsmen of Mount Gilead, and when war arose between them and the Am-

monites they sent an embassy to ask him to become their chieftain. Jephthah readily consented, but on condition that if he were victorious he should then be judge over his people. To this condition they agreed. Jephthah showed the utmost skill in so negotiating with the Ammonites as to gain time for sufficient preparation. "Be content," he said by his ambassadors to the Ammonites, "Be content with the land that Chemosh, thy god, giveth thee to possess." There was still a good deal of heathenism in Jephthah's religious views, since he seems to have thought that Chemosh was the god of Ammon in the same sense that Jehovah was the God of Israel. Nevertheless he was thoroughly sincere and devout; and when he marched against the Ammonites he made a solemn vow unto Jehovah that if Jehovah granted victory to his arms, then whatsoever should first come forth out of his house to meet him when he returned in peace from battle should be offered up to God for a burnt offering. His victory was speedy and complete, and he returned in peace and joy to his house in Mizpeh. The old Greeks had a saying, "Call no man happy till he dies;" and the fate of Jephthah illustrates the saying. At his home in Mizpeh he had an only child, a daughter; and "beside her he had neither son nor daughter" (Judges xi:34). As he drew near to his dwelling this daughter came bounding to meet him, dancing with her maidens and playing on her timbrel. This, then, was the offering he had vowed to pay as the price of victory, and the boldest warrior of the desert dared not break that vow. "Ah, my daughter; ah, my daughter," he cried, as he rent his robe, "thou hast brought me very low. I have opened my mouth to the Lord, *and I*

*cannot go back!*" The answer of his child was worthy of herself and of her sire. "My father," she said, "if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth, forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon" (Judges xi: 36). One boon only she craved, and that was that she might go away with her companions on the hills and through the woods of Gilead, and bewail the loss of a joyous motherhood, which every Israelitish maiden cherished as her dearest hope. She went, and she returned; and what then happened no man knows. For ages no one doubted that the maiden was slaughtered and her body burned to ashes in fulfillment of her father's vow. Of late some commentators have conceived that a life of celibate seclusion was the fate imposed upon her; but the truth cannot be ascertained. Either way it was a cruel and horrible mistake. If the poor half-heathen Jephthah, who had drunk in heathenism with his persecuted mother's milk, had only known the law which he intended to obey, he would have known that when an Israelite devoted himself or his child to God, he might redeem himself or his child on payment of certain shekels (Lev. xxvii: 1-8); and then the world would never have been thrilled with this sad story.

Happily no doubt for him, Jephthah was not allowed much time for the indulgence of his grief. The men of Ephraim, on the western side of Jordan, who had refused to join in war against the Ammonites, now challenged his right to go to war without their consent, and boldly invaded Gilead to punish him. Jephthah answered with great moderation, but when they forced a battle he

defeated them, and when they broke in flight he sent to occupy the only ford (probably Beth-barah) by which they could return into their own country. As the fugitives approached the ford they were asked if they were Ephraimites, and if they said they were not, the men of Gilead bade them pronounce the word *shibboleth*, which means a *stream* or an *ear of corn*. This word the Ephraimites invariably pronounced *sibboleth*, for they "could not frame to pronounce it aright;" and being thus easily detected, they were put to death. After this second victory, Jephthah held his dearly-purchased judgeship just six years. "Then died Jephthah, the Gileadite, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead" (Judges xii : 7).

As the pilgrims, on their way to the passover, passed down the Ghor, every part of Mount Gilead would be sure to recall sacred and tragic historical recollections. Most of the cities forming the famous confederacy of Decapolis were in that locality, though its boundaries apparently extended from Damascus on the north to the Jabbok on the south. The "ten cities" are commonly reckoned as follows: Scythopolis (Beth-shean), Hippos, Gadara, Pella, Philadelphia (or Rabbath Ammon), Gerasa, Dion, Banatha, Damascus and Raphana; but some writers omit Damascus and insert in place of it Abila, the capital of the Tetrarchy of Abilene. Few of these ten cities fall within our present scope, but some of them, and others not counted among them, deserve attention.

Gadara is mentioned only incidentally in Holy Scripture, where we read of our Lord's subsequent visit to "the country of the Gadarenes" (Mark v : 1 ; Luke viii :



26). It is now called *Um-Keis*, and is situated on a steep hill three miles south of the Hieromax and about nine or ten miles from the Jordan. At the foot of the hill and on the banks of the Hieromax were celebrated hot springs and baths which are mentioned by Josephus. In the time of the Roman domination Gadara was one of the most strongly fortified cities of the country, and the remains are still imposing. "Their most remarkable feature," says Dr. Tristram, "is a perfect Roman street more than half a mile long, with the ruts worn by the chariot-wheels; colonnades on either side, of which the columns are lying prostrate though many bases are standing; and massive crypt-like cells in a long row, apparently a market or bazaar." There is also a fine amphitheatre and a very perfect theatre. To the east of Gadara is a field of tombs. Several acres are strewn with stone coffins and their lids; and the whole district is perforated with caves of sepulture, which are now used for dwellings or temporary shelter by the tribes which visit that neighborhood for a part of the year. Gadara was the scene of one of our Lord's most wonderful miracles, which is recorded by all three of the synoptic evangelists (Matt. viii: 28-34; Mark v: 1-21; Luke viii: 26-40). When Jesus crossed over the sea of Galilee into *Gadaritis*, the "country of the Gadarenes," which at that time was understood to extend to the Sea of Galilee, the demoniacs met Him at a short distance from the steep shore; they had come from the field of tombs, where they made their abode, wearing no clothes, and having no other dwelling; and when the demons were cast out and entered into the swine, then the unclean beasts ran violently down the steep declivity which Jesus had

just ascended. Nothing could fit more accurately into the topographical features of the locality than the circumstances described in connection with this miracle, provided that the locality is understood to be the part of Gadaritis extending to the Sea of Galilee, and not the city of Gadara itself.

About sixteen miles southward from Gadara was Jabesh Gilead, the scene of one of those wild massacres which occurred when there was no king in Israel and every man did that which was right in his own eyes. A fearful offense had been committed by the men of Gibeah in the tribe of Benjamin, which so horrified the other tribes that with one consent they assembled and marched into the territory of Benjamin, demanding that the offenders should be given up to condign punishment. The Benjamites refused to surrender their fellow-tribesmen, and then, after two days of bloody defeat, the Israelites by a stratagem took and destroyed Gibeah. Their vengeance was terrible, for they left none of the tribe of Benjamin alive except six hundred men who succeeded in making their escape. Moreover, they made a solemn oath that they would not give their daughters to those men to enable them to reconstitute their families. But when they came to reflect, they began to bewail the almost complete extirpation of one of the twelve tribes of Israel; and in their dread of that loss they would now have been willing to give their daughters in marriage to the Benjamites if their oath had not made it impossible. They inquired therefore whether there were none of the Israelites who had not taken part in the war on Benjamin, and finding that the men of Jabesh Gilead had kept out of the war, they sent and put to

death every soul of the inhabitants of that town except four hundred unmarried women, whom they gave to the Benjamites to be their wives. The remaining two hundred Benjamites were provided for by carrying off two hundred maidens from the yearly dance of the women of Shiloh.

The name of Jabesh still survives in the *Wady Yabes*, a glen with a perennial stream flowing through it to the Jordan, which it enters a little south of Beth-shean. The town is on a hill directly opposite to Beth-shean, on which it looks down; and when the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead heard that the bodies of Saul and his sons, after the battle in which they died, had been dishonored in the town which stood fairly under their eyes, "the valiant men of the city rose up in the night and took the bodies and came to Gilead, and burned them there; and they took their bones and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days." At Jabesh, therefore, Saul rested after all his many years of error and unsettled intellect; and although the remains were afterward removed to the sepulchre of Kish in Zelah (2 Sam. xxi:12-14) yet no Hebrew pilgrim could ever pass that spot without gentle thoughts of the unhappy king.

About six miles northwest of Jabesh is *Pella*, a city of the Decapolis, which is not mentioned in Scripture, but which is memorable in Christian history. When Jerusalem was about to be besieged by Titus the Christian inhabitants remembered our Lord's warning, and the whole Christian community fled to Pella, where they abode in undisturbed safety. The place is now entirely deserted, but its ruins are extensive and there remains a splendid fountain with two columns near it standing upright still.

*Mahanaim*, or "the hosts," cannot be identified with perfect satisfaction, but Dr. Tristram thinks it must have been at a place still called *Mahneh*, where there is a fine fountain and an open pool, and traces of buildings all grass-grown and now buried beneath the soil. It received its name of Mahanaim from Jacob, when he was returning into Canaan, in honor of God's hosts of angels that met him in the way after his separation from Laban (Gen. xxxii : 1, 2). Mahanaim subsequently became a place of importance. It was here that Abner crowned Ishbosheth the son of Saul, King of Israel, when David was crowned King of Judah at Hebron; here Ishbosheth reigned for two years (2 Sam. ii : 8-10); and here at last he was murdered (2 Sam. iv : 5-7). It was to Mahanaim that David fled at the time of Absalom's rebellion, and not far from Mahanaim the decisive battle was fought in which Absalom lost his usurped throne and his life. It was at the gate of Mahanaim that David sat waiting for news of the event of that battle; and it was to a chamber over the gate of Mahanaim that he went weeping and saying, "O, my son, Absalom! My son, my son, Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" Except as one of Solomon's commissariat districts, Mahanaim does not again appear in history.

A little to the south of the supposed site of Mahanaim is the city of *Gerasa*, now called *Jerash*. At the time of Christ it was one of the most important cities of Decapolis. In the Jewish war it was taken and burnt by order of Vespasian, but was restored to great splendor under the Antonines. Of its early history we know nothing, nor do we know anything of its abandonment.

It seems never to have been occupied by the Saracens. It remains now almost as the Romans left it. Dr. Tristram says it is probably the most perfect Roman city left above ground; his description of it is therefore interesting. "It occupies both banks of a little stream in the centre of a wide open valley. The paved roads both north and south are unbroken, skirted with tombs and monuments, pagan and Christian. The walls are, in places, of the original height, inclosing a square of about a mile with the little stream buried in oleanders running through the centre and many a street bridge over it. The streets remain—the principal one having a double row of columns a mile in length, richly carved, fronting temple and palace in rapid succession. The side streets cross at right angles. For a thousand years it has been a silent wilderness, yet all can be traced. Even the sockets of the gates still remain in the arches of the gateways, and the water still runs in the channel to flood the circus for mock sea-fights. Temple, theatre, triumphal arch, forum, baths, Christian cathedral, are all here in every variety of later Roman architecture. Yet this was but a distant provincial city, standing almost in the Arabian desert and almost without a history."

Somewhere between Mahanaim and the river Jabbok was *Peniel*, or *Penuel*, "the Face of God," so called by Jacob after he had wrestled all night with the angel, who gave him the name of Israel; "because," the patriarch said, "I have seen God, face to face!" Its exact locality cannot be ascertained, though it was a fortified place in the time of the Judges (Judg. viii : 8-17).

When the pilgrims approached the Jabbok on their way southward they would be in the neighborhood of

Succoth, a place of which no recognized vestige remains. There Jacob must have sojourned for a time after leaving Peniel, since he built him a house there and made permanent booths for his cattle (Gen. xxxiii : 17). After the great victory of Gideon over the Midianites, when he and his brave three hundred were "faint yet pursuing," Zeba and Zalmunna the men of Succoth refused to give them bread lest Gideon might not after all capture his fleeing foes. Submitting to this inhospitality, Gideon promised to chastise the men of Succoth when he should return; and accordingly, when he did return with the heads of the Midianitish princes he took the seventy-seven elders or sheiks of Succoth, and "taught them" a sharp lesson with thorns and briars of the wilderness (Judg. viii : 4-16). On the western side of Jordan there was another Succoth, which Dr. Robinson identifies with *Sakut*, a ruin about ten miles west of the river; but while this locality would suit the story of Gideon it is apparently too far north for the Succoth of Jacob, besides which the Succoth of Jacob appears to have been on the eastern side of Jordan. Wherever the true site may have been, Solomon placed his brass foundries for casting the metal work of the temple "in the district of Jordan, in the fat or soft ground between Succoth and Zarthan" (1 Kings vii : 46) or "between Succoth and Zeredatha" (2 Chron. iv. : 17). The site of Zarthan or Zeredatha is wholly unknown.

So at length passing on their left the city of Aroer, the scene of Jephthah's victory over the Amorites, the pilgrims would come into the *Plain of Jordan*, and would soon find themselves at *Beth-nimrah*, the *House of the Leopard*, now called *Beit-nimrim*, the House of Leopards.

The Septuagint, as Dr. Tristram remarks, renders Beth-nimrah by *Beth-abara*, the House of the Ford, probably because, at the time when the Septuagint translation was made, the leopards had disappeared before the advance of population and the ford at Beth-nimrah had come to be known and recognized as the principal passage for travellers to Gilead and Galilee. Somewhere near this spot it must have been that the host of Israel crossed over into the Promised Land. The whole people were encamped in the plain of Jordan. In the sultry groves of *Abel-shittim*, "the Marshes of the Acacia," which spread out along the plain, they had been seduced by the Moabites into the licentious rites of Baal-Peor, and had been sorely punished for their sin (Numb. xxv : 1-9). At length, from the upper part of the plain, the priests advanced boldly into the bed of the stream, bearing the ark of God; then, we are told, the waters from above were arrested in their flow, and when the waters below had flowed on into the Dead Sea the countless multitude of Israel was able to cross over dry-shod into the land that was thenceforth to be their own (Josh. iii. 14-17). Centuries later, it must have been close to this spot that the Prophet Elijah, on the last day of his earthly life, smote the waters of Jordan with his mantle and made a way for himself and Elisha to the borders of his native Gilead, where he was to be taken up into heaven by a whirlwind in the sight of his faithful follower (2 Kings ii : 1-11); and it must have been near the same historic spot that Jesus was baptized by His great forerunner, the Baptist (Matt. iii : 13; Mark i : 9; Luke iii : 21). Beth-nimrah exactly corresponds with the incidental descriptions of the place where John baptized as

we find them in the gospels. It is "beyond Jordan" (John 1:28); it is accessible to "Jerusalem and all Judea" (Matt. iii:5; Mark 1:5); and the mention of St. Matthew of "the region round about Jordan" in all probability signifies the Plain of Jordan, the great Oasis of Jericho.

Looking southeast from Beth-nimrah, which we may now assume to be the Bethabara of St. John, the pilgrims would behold the mountains of Moab rising gloomily before them—the *Pisgah* whence Moses was permitted to view the Promised Land. Pisgah, like Gilead and Lebanon, does not designate a particular peak, but a mountain range of which the "head" or loftiest crest is *Mount Nebo*. It was to the top of Nebo, which the Arabs call *Jebel Mebbeh*, that Moses the man of God was sent to die; and before he died God permitted him to behold a wide prospect of the land to whose borders he had led the fugitive slaves of the Egyptians. "The Lord showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah unto the utmost sea, and the South, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the City of Palm Trees, unto Zoar" (Deut. xxxiv:1-3). The view from the summit of Mount Nebo corresponds with this statement. From the same spot the traveller can descry the mountains of Gilead stretching northward to Bashan, while on their eastern part they slope gradually to the far-off Arabian plain, waving with corn and grass, without a house, a tree, or a bush, but with the black tents of the Arabs dotted far and near, and visible through the glass. The eastern side of the Dead Sea of course is not visible, but through a break in the middle Engedi is



seen, still green in the distance. Behind it, on the southwest, appears the ridge of Hebron as far as Bethlehem and Jerusalem, with the Church of the Ascension seated on the summit of the Mount of Olives. To the northwest is Gerizim, with the Plain of Esdraelon lying peacefully beyond, and yet further in the same direction is the ridge of Carmel. On the right of Carmel appears the summit of Mount Tabor, with Gilboa and Little Hermon lying near by, while beyond all rises the snow-capped Hermon; and then the eye, sweeping down the Ghor, rests at last on Jericho, just beyond the ford. As Moses looked between the Jordan and the eminence on which he stood he saw beneath him the little city of Zoar, to which Lot escaped from Sodom (Gen. xix : 17-22).

The cities of the plain, which were destroyed for their iniquities, are commonly supposed to have been situated within the boundaries of what is now the Dead Sea, and their destruction is supposed to have been accomplished by some tremendous geological convulsion by means of which the Dead Sea came into existence. There is no ground whatever for such an opinion. It is not sustained by the language of Scripture; and there is nothing to sustain it in the geological formation of the Dead Sea, which has come into existence in the same way as similar salt lakes in the interior of Africa. It is possible that no extraordinary catastrophe would be required to produce the events described in Genesis. The whole neighborhood abounds in sulphur; from the sea itself masses of bitumen are thrown up, and during the earthquake of 1837 whole islands of that substance were detached and floated on the surface. Given an abundance of the combustibles, and it would require only "fire

from heaven," that is to say a lightning storm, to destroy the cities of the plain. Dr. Tristram gives many scriptural reasons why it is impossible to believe that these unfortunate cities could have occupied the present place of the Dead Sea, and why it is extremely probable that they did stand in the Plain of Jordan.

From the summit of Mount Nebo the brave old ruler of Israel looked down over the Land of Promise. He was a hundred and twenty years old, but his eye was not dim and his natural force was not abated. Again he received the assurance that God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob should be kept, though he himself was not to see its fulfillment; and then "Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord; and He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."

The incomparable sacredness of Jordan over all other rivers in the world dates not from the scenes of carnage which its banks have witnessed, but from the baptism of the Saviour in its waters; and the very water of the Jordan itself has always been especially, and even superstitiously, venerated. In the time of Constantine it was considered a great privilege to be baptized in Jordan or with water brought from Jordan. In the sixth century marble steps were built leading down to the place where Christ was believed to have been baptized, and many pilgrims there went down into the river wearing a white robe, which they were to wear only once again—as their burial shroud. Shipmasters carried away with them bottles of water, with which they sprinkled their vessels before making their homeward voyage. At this present

time, on every Easter Monday thousands of pilgrims are escorted by guards of Turkish troops to bathe at a lower ford, about two miles above the Dead Sea; and as the Easter of the Greeks falls on a different day from that of the Latins, there is no particular rivalry between these sects; indeed, they bathe at different places, the Greeks at a spot called *Kasr el Yehudi*, and the Latins at another spot called *Makta*. The crowd, however, is always a motley one. To quote from Dr. Geikie, "the streets of Jerusalem are for the time deserted to see the caravans set out; women in long white dresses and veils, men in flowing robes and turbans, covering the space outside the walls and slopes and hollows of the valley of Jehoshaphat to see the start. The procession streams from the gate, and pours along the camel track toward Bethany and the Jordan—some on foot, others on horseback, or on asses, mules or camels. Some companies travel with tents and provisions, to make everything comfortable on the journey. Here a woman on horseback, with a child on each arm, is to be seen; there in a pannier on one side of a mule is a woman, in the other on the opposite side is a man; or a dromedary, with a great frame across its hump, bears a family with all its coverlets and utensils. The Russian pilgrims, men, women and priests, if it be the Greek Easter, are afoot in heavy boots, fur caps, and clothing more fitted for Archangel than for the Jordan Valley. Midway comes a body of Turkish horse with drawn swords, clearing the way for the governor; then pilgrims again. Drawn from every land, they have travelled thousands of miles in the belief that to see the Holy Places and to bathe in the Jordan will tell on their eternal happiness."

At night the pilgrims camp at *Er Riha*, the modern Jericho, and long before the next day breaks they are up and on their way, by torchlight, to the banks of Jordan. As the sun is rising over the eastern mountains the foremost pilgrims reach the sacred river. "Before long the high bank above the trees and reeds is crowded with horses and mules, camels and asses, in terrible confusion; old, young, men, women and children of many nationalities, all pressing together in seemingly inextricable disorder. Some strip themselves naked, but most of them plunge in clad in a white gown, which is to serve hereafter as a shroud, consecrated by its present use. Families bathe together, the father immersing the infant and other children, that they may not need to make the pilgrimage in later life. Most of them keep near the shore, but some strike boldly out into the current. In little more than two hours the banks are once more deserted, the pilgrims remounting their motley army of beasts with the same grave quiet as they had shown on leaving them for a time; and before noon they are back again at their encampment."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### FROM JORDAN TO JERUSALEM.

LEAVING the Ghor behind them, the Holy Family and the band of pilgrims with whom they were in company would pass through the ford of Bethabara and turn westward toward the Holy City. Before them lies the Plain of Jericho. On their left, but not far off, is a place of renown in the annals of Israel.

When the host of Israel in entering the Promised Land had marched through the empty bed of the Jordan, Joshua commanded one man of each of the twelve tribes to take out of the channel of the river, where the priest's feet had stood firm, twelve stones, which were to be carried to the place of their encampment that night (Josh. iv : 1-3). Those twelve stones were accordingly set up at *Gilgal* (Josh. iv : 20). Until very recently the site of *Gilgal* was unknown, but it is now identified at *Tel Jiljalia*, a mound over the ancient town, and *Birket Jiljalia*, a pond belonging to it. Captain Conder supposes that the twelve stones taken out of Jordan were set up as a sort of miniature Stonehenge. This may or may not be true, but nothing of the kind is now to be found ; and indeed, stones which could be carried on the shoulders of single men might easily disappear in the course of so many ages.

The name *Jiljalia*, the Arabic equivalent for *Gilgal*, still lingers in Palestine. There is one in the Plain of

Sharon, about thirteen miles north of Lydda, which is probably the Gilgal of Joshua xii : 23 ; another still further north ; a third, which is half-way between Tibneh and Shiloh, seems to be the Gilgal *above* Bethel, so often mentioned in connection with the Prophet Elijah. A fourth Gilgal, which has not been identified, was "beside the Plains of Moreh" (Deut. xi : 30). It was at none of these, however, but at Gilgal in the Jordan plain, about four miles southwest from the probable place of passage over the river, that Joshua kept his headquarters after the taking of Jericho and Ai (Josh. ix : 6 ; x : 6, 15, 43 ; xiv : 6). At this Gilgal the tabernacle was set up, and there it remained until it was removed to Shiloh (Josh. xviii : 1). At the same Gilgal Samuel made his yearly circuit as judge of Israel (1 Sam. vii : 16), and there after Saul's victory over the Ammonites the new sovereign's authority was universally acknowledged, and there his reign was solemnly inaugurated with great rejoicing (1 Sam. xi : 14, 15). Gilgal seems to have retained the character of a religious centre or sanctuary after the time of Joshua ; and early in the days of the judges an "angel"—perhaps a prophet—of the Lord was sent thence to rebuke the people for making leagues with the heathen inhabitants of the land (Judg. ii : 1–2). Later on its situation and importance were such that it was deemed to be the proper place for the people of Judah to meet King David when he returned from Mahanaim, after the death of Absalom (2 Sam. xix : 15). But the inhabitants of Gilgal at last fell into such idolatry as to be denounced by the Prophets Hosea and Amos for making their city a chief place of idolatrous worship (Hosea iv : 15 ; ix : 15 ; xii : 11 ; Amos iv : 4 ; v : 5).

A little to the south of Gilgal, *Beth-Hoglah*, the Haunt of Partridges, stood on the boundary line which separated the tribe of Benjamin from that of Judah (Josh. xv : 6 ; xviii : 19). It is still known by the name of *Ain-hajla*, or the Fountain of Hoglah, from the finest spring to be found in the whole Ghor. The sparkling stream which gushes forth from it produces verdure wherever it flows, and if used for irrigation it would cause fertility around it like the spring at En-Gannim. But it is not used, and the surrounding land, with the exception of a small natural oasis, is a barren waste. A couple of miles or less further to the south there was until within the last twenty years a ruin called *Kasr Hajla*, or the Tower of Hoglah, which was all that remained of an old monastery. It is probable that this ruin was a place of prayer of monks of the order of St. Basil, who had fled from the turmoil of the world more than fifteen hundred years ago, and whose successors continued, until the sixteenth century, to offer hospitality to pilgrims. For three hundred years it was deserted, but in 1882 the stones of the old ruin were removed to make room for a new monastery at the same spot.

Five miles to the northwest of Gilgal, four hundred feet above the Jordan near the base of a rugged, precipitous and forbidding mountain and at the foot of a great mound of ruinous *débris*, a noble spring gushes from the rock, pouring its water into an old basin about forty feet long by twenty-five feet broad and built of hewn stones. The mound of ruins is all that now remains of the ancient Canaanitish city of Jericho, the *City of Palm Trees* (Deut. xxxiv : 3 ; Judg. i : 16), the first walled town taken by the Israelites on the western side

of Jordan. It was strongly fortified; but since the Israelites were able to march round it seven times in a single day (Josh. vi : 4), it can have been of no great size. It is first mentioned in connection with the visit to it of the spies who were entertained by Rahab, and who made a covenant with her that when the city should be taken, she and her kindred should be spared (Josh. ii : 1-22). By a special miracle Jericho was taken, the inhabitants were put to the sword, and the whole town was levelled with the ground (Josh. vi : 1-21). There is no reason to suppose that the house of Rahab, which was built upon the city wall, was spared in the general destruction, but that trivial circumstance did not prevent the very house itself from being shown in the Middle Ages, as its site is still shown to travellers of our own time. After the destruction of Jericho, Joshua laid this curse upon the man who should rebuild it, that its foundation should be laid in his first-born and its gates set up in his youngest son, or in other words that his children should perish (Josh. vi : 26). Possibly he meant only to forbid the building of a fortified city; but certain it is that Jericho was ultimately rebuilt, though the curse of Joshua is said to have been fulfilled in the family of Hiel (1 Kings xvi : 34). When restored it became a place of importance, and either in the city or in its immediate vicinity was established one of the schools of the prophets (2 Kings ii : 5, 7). It was frequently visited by the Prophets Elijah and Elisha. It was from Jericho that Elijah set out with his faithful pupil on that last stage of his earthly journey which was to take him back to his native Gilead, there to be delivered from the heavy burden he had been called to bear (2 Kings ii : 4-6).



Dr. Tristram has no doubt that the great spring of Jericho, which is now called by the Arabs *Ain es Sultan*, or the *Sultan's Spring*, but by Europeans the Spring of Elisha, is "beyond question identical with the fountain whose bitter waters were healed by the Prophet Elisha" (2 Kings ii : 19-22). He considers that in its former brackish state, which it shared with many other springs of that neighborhood, its waters though disagreeable to the taste and unfit for drinking were not inimical to vegetation, and especially not so to the palm which rejoices in saline ground. Be that as it may, the water of Elisha's spring is now sweet and wholesome, though certainly not cool, its temperature being 84 degrees Fahrenheit.

It cannot have been far from that spring, since it was in the Plain of Jericho, that the luckless King Zedekiah was captured by the Chaldeans after the conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings xxv : 5). Jericho shared in the misfortunes of that time of desolation. When it was restored we do not know, but after the captivity three hundred and forty-five heads of houses returned to their old home (Neh. vii : 36), and the men of Jericho took part in rebuilding Jerusalem (Neh. iii : 2). From that time on Jericho was one of the principal cities of the Jews. For a single night the great Pompey encamped beside it, and Antony gave it with its fruitful plain as a royal gift to Cleopatra. It was then especially renowned for its gardens of balsam, which Dr. Hooker supposes to have been the *zakkam*, a tropical plant which still flourishes there and yields an oil famous for its healing qualities. Herod farmed, and at length purchased, Jericho from Cleopatra ; and when it had been sacked by his Roman allies he magnificently rebuilt and fortified it.

Jericho was not his capital, but his winter residence, and there he died. It was in an amphitheatre of his own construction that Salome publicly announced the death of the unlamented tyrant. Not long after his death the splendid city of Herod was taken and burned by a rebellious slave called Simon; but it was again rebuilt by Archelaus with a beauty which it had perhaps not before had. Certainly the plain had never before had such advantages as Archelaus gave it, for he built aqueducts to irrigate the lands, and he made extensive plantations of palms, so that Jericho again became a "City of Palm Trees." Its streets appear to have been broad enough to allow the growth of sycamores for shade (Luke xix : 4), and all its arrangements may be presumed to have been in the magnificent and sumptuous fashion which was characteristic of Herodian cities.

In all probability the beautiful Jericho of Archelaus was the first city worthy of the name that the Child Jesus ever saw. Independently of its beauty and novelty it must have been most interesting to Him from the circumstance that Rahab, whose name is so prominently connected with its early history, had become the wife of Salmon (who was possibly one of the spies whose lives she had saved), and the mother of Boaz, the husband of Ruth (Matt. i : 5). Rahab the Canaanite, therefore, as well as Ruth the Moabitess, was an ancestress of Jesus Christ. Not only on the occasion of his first journey to Jerusalem but, as it seems, often afterward, Jesus visited the new old City of Palm Trees. At Jericho He gave sight to two, or perhaps it may have been three, blind men (Matt. xx : 30; Mark x : 46; Luke xviii : 35); at Jericho He was entertained at the house of Zaccheus, the

chief publican or superintendent of customs in that district, who had climbed one of the sycamores which lined the way in order to see Jesus pass by; and it was in the road between Jerusalem and Jericho that He chose to lay the scene of his lovely parable of the Good Samaritan.

After the time of Christ Jericho was destroyed by Vespasian, but it was again rebuilt and still existed in the time of St. Jerome. Origen found there a version of the Old Testament Scriptures and other valuable manuscripts. It was the see of a bishop who was dependent on the See of Jerusalem; and bishops of Jericho took part in several church councils of the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries. After awhile the city fell into decay and has never again been rebuilt. The city of Herod had been somewhat to the south of the ancient city of the Canaanites, and if there was a city of Jericho in the time of the Crusades it must have been more than a mile further to the southwest, at the site of the present Er Riha, where there is a large square castle or redoubt which must have been built in that period and which is foolishly supposed to occupy the former site of the house of Zaccheus. In the time of the Crusades the Plain of Jericho was immensely productive; it was assigned to the Knights Templars of Jerusalem, and was considered to be worth \$25,000 of yearly revenue. This was an enormous sum in that age, and was chiefly derived from the culture of sugar cane, for it is a curious fact that before America was discovered sorghum cane was successfully cultivated at Jericho. Not far from the great spring of Elisha are the remains of an old sugar mill, formerly used by the Templars.

The rugged mountain which rises behind the Fountain

of Elisha and the site of ancient Jericho is *Mount Quarantania*, or the Mountain of the Forty Days, now called *Jebel Karantel*. It is the reputed scene of the Temptation of Christ. The tradition may be more ancient than the time of the Crusades, and it has been well said by one who is not too prone to credit ecclesiastical conditions that, rising as it does naked and arid like a mountain of malediction, imagination sees in it a fit place to be the haunt of evil influences—a place where, in the language of the prophets, “the owls dwell and the satyrs dance.” There for forty days was Jesus with the wild beasts and in the chosen home of the vulture; driven thither of the Spirit to be tempted of the devil, and yet guarded by angels, so that the beasts were powerless to hurt Him. Perhaps in the daytime, or in the solemn season of His nightly watchings, He looked down from the grim crest of Quarantania upon the winding stream of the Jordan, as the sons of the prophets had long before looked down from the same spot when the world-worn prophet of Carmel was passing over to the scene of his deliverance (2 Kings ii : 7, 15).

So steep and dangerous are the precipitous sides of *Jebel Karantel* that in all cases a guide is considered as necessary as in climbing the Alps. Even Dr. Thomson did not care to try that difficult ascent; and on one occasion when he might have done so, the caves which abound on the mountain side were occupied by robbers, so that no one could venture to approach. Canon Tristram happily did visit them with a party of travellers, and his account of those curious caves is extremely interesting. He says:

“On the eastern side are some forty habitable caves

and chapels ; and probably there is a much larger number on the south face, in the gorge of the Kelt. These caves have all been approached by staircases and paths hewn out of the face of the rock ; but time and water have worn away many of these, and left the upper caverns in some cases wholly inaccessible. The lowest range of caves is close to the sloping *débris*, and they are still tenanted by the Arabs, who use them for sheepfolds and donkey-stables, and sometimes, as we discovered, for corn and straw depots. The next tier is easily reached, and generally every spring a few devout Abyssinian Christians are in the habit of coming and remaining here for forty days, to keep their Lent on the spot where they suppose our Lord to have fasted and been tempted.

“This tier is easily accessible to any one with a steady head. The way to it is by a niche hollowed in the side of the precipice. The ground floor of these cells, if the expression may apply to such aerial dwellings, appears to have been a series of chambers, with recesses hollowed for beds and for cupboards. There are four of these apartments, opening into each other, the natural caverns having been artificially enlarged. Below is a well-plastered reservoir or tank, to which the water has formerly been conveyed through cement-lined stone tubs from the waterfall, several hundred feet to the right. These tubs are neatly concealed in the rock and quite out of the reach of any attack.”

In the third chamber, which was reached with difficulty through “a small hole scooped out of the native rock, were three consecutive chambers, with a well-arched front of fine dressed stone and various arched doorways and windows looking east, all lined with frescoes of which

the faces alone had been chipped out by the Moslem iconoclasts. The centre room was evidently a chapel, covered with Byzantine paintings of saints and had an apse in the east front with a small lancet-window. The dome of the apse was filled by a fresco of our Lord with a Greek inscription over it."

Canon Tristram and his party climbed with the aid of a rope through another hole in the rock, "and with a short exercise of the chimney-sweep's art" found themselves "in a third tier of cells, similar to the lower ones and covered with the undisturbed dust of ages. Behind the chapel was a dark cave, with an entrance eighteen inches high, full of human bones and skulls, with dust several inches deep. We were in the burial-place of the anchorites. The skeletons were laid east and west, awaiting the resurrection." Still higher did the party climb, only to find similar cells, chapels, and caverns strewn with human bones and skulls. There were some inscriptions, but they were of no historical value.

The Plain of Jericho is now almost entirely barren. Besides the Spring of Elisha, there is another spring of equal magnitude about two miles further up. It is called *Ain Duk*, and is probably at the site of the ancient fortress of *Docus*. If used for purposes of irrigation, the water from these two springs might suffice to make a large part of the plain as prolific as ever. There is hardly anything which might not be successfully cultivated there; yet the plain is desolate, with the exception of a few gardens and patches of wheat and tobacco, which the inhabitants raise for their own consumption. For fruits, they are content with the large clusters of grapes which grow over their huts. Perhaps the most characteristic

growth of the plain of Jericho is now the apple of Sodom, as it is called, a woody shrub growing to a height of three or four feet, with broad leaves which are woolly on the under side. The fruit resembles the apple, and is first yellow and then red. It is nauseous beyond description, and when fully ripe it contains within its beautiful rind nothing but dry seeds and a dusty powder. From this fruit, which grows extensively on the shores of the Dead Sea, poets have borrowed the simile of

“Dead Sea fruits that tempt the eye,  
But turn to ashes on the lips.”

The modern village, if it can be called so, of *El Riha* preserves the name of the ancient Jericho, but is more than a mile from the ancient site. It is nothing more than a collection of miserable hovels, inhabited by people of the most wretched sort, whom some travellers believe to be really of gypsy stock. They are among the rudest and most degraded of the inhabitants of Palestine, and are addicted to vices of the most disgusting character.

From Jericho to Jerusalem is only a distance of some thirteen miles, yet the road is one continual ascent, since Jerusalem is 3600 feet higher than Jericho. About two miles east of Jericho the pilgrims would come to *Wady Kelt*, a gloomy mountain gorge 500 feet high, cut by the torrent through the solid rock and with sides so precipitously perpendicular that only the coney and the ibex can attempt to scale them. At the bottom of this frightful chasm is a stream less than fifty feet in width, on which the sun shines but a few minutes in the day, with beds of reeds and rushes and with oleanders fringing its sides. Within the two frowning cliffs, which gloomily

confront each other, are caves and caverns, now wholly inaccessible but once inhabited by Christian monks who thought to find God where no man might safely find them; and between these upright walls of nature's masonry ravens, eagles and vultures sail in undisturbed security. This place of unimaginable solitude and grandeur is thought by Dr. Robinson and others to be the Brook (or torrent) of Cherith, where Elijah hid himself during the great drought which he foretold to King Ahab (1 Kings xvii: 1-8). There he might well feel secure from the pursuit of his enemies, and there the Lord commanded the ravens to feed him day by day. If the word translated *ravens* can, as it is said, be properly translated *Arabs*, the providence which watched over the prophet in his time of danger was surely none the less; for the Arabs of that district are as wild as ravens, and much more dangerous.

In modern, as in ancient times, the road between Jerusalem and Jericho is haunted by robbers. Now, as then, the traveller is entirely likely to "fall among thieves." Mr. Henry A. Harper, the amusing author of "Walks in Palestine," tells how he came near suffering from a misunderstanding of one of these freebooters of the desert. The Turkish government had been obliged to give to a certain sheikh, living not far from Bethany, the official right, for a consideration, "to protect" travellers in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, which is very much the same as a right to exact moderate blackmail. Mr. Harper, having made the proper arrangements as he supposed, one day went quietly sketching, and was unpleasantly interrupted by the *ping!* of a rifle-shot in uncomfortable proximity to his person. Presently the man who

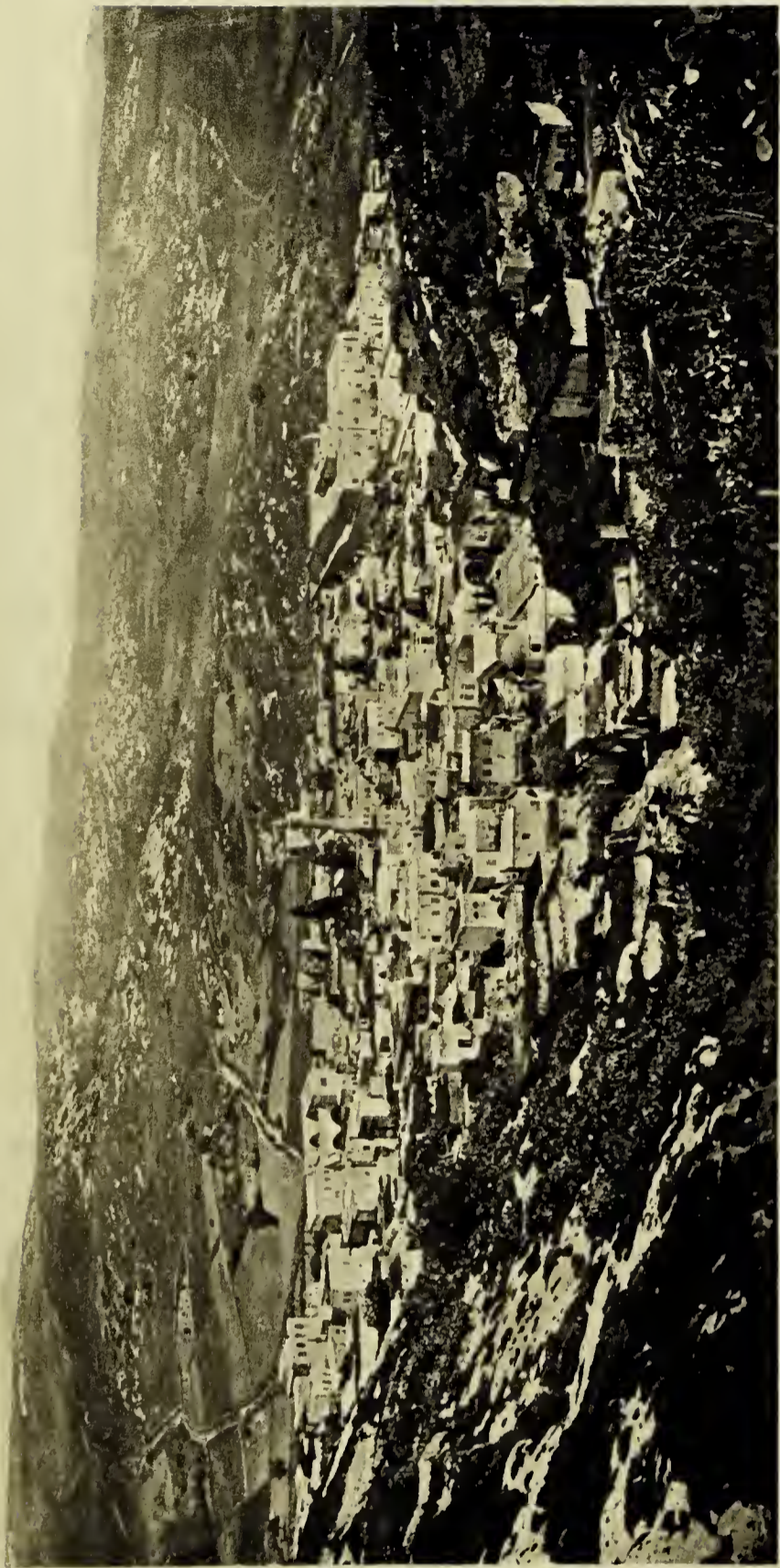


had coolly shot at him came to his feet with the amplest apologies. He had simply seen a stranger, apparently without "protection," and with the true Arab instinct had tried to kill him for such plunder as the murder might bring. Such is Arab morality. The poor traveller who "went down from Jerusalem and Jericho, and fell among thieves" (Luke x : 30) not many miles from the same spot was, perhaps, beset by the lineal ancestors of the Arab of Mr. Harper's adventure.

Six or seven miles through a rough and uninteresting country would bring the travellers to the half-way resting-place between Jerusalem and Jericho. It is now called *Hadrur Khan*, and consists of some ruins situated on a knoll in a wild but dreary region. The ruins are not very ancient, but the tenacity with which the orientals cling to old customs and old places, as well as its position midway between Jerusalem and Jericho, makes it very likely that here was the inn which our Lord had in mind in the parable of the good Samaritan. It has now no host, and furnishes no entertainment for man or beast; but at that time this half-way house must have been a halting-place of sufficient importance to be kept up for the regular entertainment of travellers. Indeed it is altogether probable that our Saviour himself, not only in His first pilgrimage to Jerusalem but often afterward, must have rested at this very spot, or near it. Both as a child, and on that last journey to a Passover at which He himself was to be the victim of the Sacrifice, it can do no harm to suppose that He took his rest at Hadrur Khan.

After two hours more of travel through a country of no particular interest, but always rising higher and higher

above the plain they had left behind, the pilgrims would pass through a valley called *Wady el Hod*, where Shimei cursed and cast stones at David when fleeing from Absalom; and on the western slope of the valley they would ascend to a spring which is called *Ain el Hod*, but which Christians call the *Apostles' Spring* because the apostles must often have visited it with their Master. It is supposed to be *En-shemesh*, or the "Sun Spring," mentioned in Joshua xv : 7. A little beyond the spring they would reach a plateau whence they could look back upon their track from the Jordan. There the mountains of Moab and Gilead would be plainly visible against the eastern sky above the Plain of Jordan and Jericho; and far below the height of the spot on which they stood the peak of Quarantania would be seen, softened in the distance. On the west they would behold the Mount of Olives rising beyond a narrow valley, and about a mile below its summit, at the foot of an intervening ridge or swelling of the mount, they would see before them at a distance of one-third of a mile the village of *Bethany*, the *House of Dates*, or perhaps more properly called the *House of Sorrow*. Not far from Bethany, probably to the east of it but in a spot which cannot now be ascertained, they would also see the village of *Beth-phage*, the House of (unripe) Figs. The hump or secondary ridge beside which Bethany is situated intercepts the view of the crest of Olivet from the village, but from the plateau of El Hod the whole of the little valley and of the mountain beyond is entirely visible. Tradition has it that it was to the plateau of El Hod that Martha went to meet Jesus after the death of her brother Lazarus; and with the confidence of perfect certainty, though there can be





no possible certainty in the case, the very spot of that meeting is still shown to the traveller.

Nothing whatever is said of Bethany in the Old Testament. Its whole interest consists in this, that our Saviour had there something more nearly like a home than He ever had elsewhere after He left the home of his childhood at Nazareth, and that it was the scene of his most famous miracle, the raising of Lazarus. If its name signified the House of Dates, the palm tree must have been cultivated there, but it has now disappeared. The palm is a tree of the desert and the valley, not of the mountains; but because of its rarity the cultivation of a few palms in a mountain district would be quite likely to attract attention and to give the name of the tree or its fruit to the place where they grew.

If Bethany signifies the House of Sorrow or the House of Poverty, a good reason for that name may well be found in the fact that lepers, the most sorrowfully hopeless and generally the poorest and most forlorn of all human beings, were allowed to dwell there (Matt. xxvi : 6; Mark xiv : 3).

From a distance Bethany presents a picture of calm seclusion and peace. It is situated in a woody hollow, with gardens or orchards of fruit trees,—olives, figs, almonds, pomegranates and carobs; but the village itself is a wretched and ruinous hamlet of forty flat-roofed mud hovels. The inhabitants are a rough and squalid people, whose chief occupation is to beg from travellers, and who know how to be as impudent as they are importunate. The name of Bethany is now replaced by *El Azariyeh*, or as Dean Stanley spells it *El Lazariyeh*, a name which is evidently derived from that of Lazarus. The house

of Lazarus is shown to this day, but it is absolutely certain that no such house can have existed for eighteen centuries. His tomb also is shown, but it cannot be the tomb mentioned in the Gospel. St. John says that Martha went to meet Jesus, and then returned and brought her sister Mary to meet Him when He "was not yet come into the town." The narrative gives it clearly to be understood that they went directly to the tomb without entering the town, and besides the Jews never made their tombs within the precincts of their towns. In the vicinity of Bethany there are cave-tombs which might be closed with a great stone and which would answer perfectly to the account of the tomb from which Lazarus was raised. But the place which is now shown as the tomb of Lazarus is within the village. It is an underground chamber twelve feet square, to which there is a descent of twenty-six steps, and within the chamber a vault where the body of Lazarus is said to have been laid. In such a place the people could not have stood around as they are said to have done; and to conform to the circumstances of that place the language of the narrative must have been considerably different from that which St. John uses. The truth is that there is no authority for the locality assigned to the house of Lazarus, to the tomb of Lazarus, or to the house of Simon the Leper, which is also shown. They are mere guesses; and there is just as little reason for the name given to an old tower which is the most conspicuous object of El Azariyeh, and which is called the Castle of Lazarus. The true interest of Bethany consists not in those special features, but in the fact that somewhere near them Jesus spent many days and some of the last nights of His

earthly life ; that He uttered here some of the loveliest of his lessons—among them the parable of the Good Samaritan ; and that in this place He wrought the last and most impressive of all his wonderful works.

Whether the human mind of the Child Jesus had any prevision of those future events and associations, as he descended from the plateau of El Hod and passed through the village of Bethany, it is useless to inquire, but one would fain hope that it did not. We need not suppose that the human mind of the Child Jesus was burdened with a foresight of the dreadful tragedy in which, twenty years later, He was himself to be the victim. If He had then foreseen all that, his would hardly have been a human childhood. But his childhood was as real as his humanity. Like other children, even He must grow in knowledge and experience, as in stature ; and as God mercifully veils from us in early life the trials and sufferings which lie before us, so we may believe, but with all reverent reserve, that the childhood of Jesus was allowed the untroubled serenity and hopeful joy which properly belong to childhood. To him, therefore, as to other boys in the pilgrim company, we may suppose that the moment when he was about to look for the first time upon Jerusalem would be a moment of intense and glad expectancy. With quickened step the pilgrims would walk down to Bethany, and passing through it they would skirt the secondary hill on which it stood and take the road which winds around the southern face of the Mount of Olives.

On their left, as they walked westward, they would have the *Mount of Offence*, “that opprobrious hill,” as Milton calls it, on which the idolatrous temples of King Solomon are supposed to have been reared, and which is

really the most southerly of four crests or elevations of the continuous range of Olivet. On their right the pilgrims would have the second of these elevations, which is called the *Hill of the Prophets*. North of that hill is the *Mount of Olives* proper, which is now called by the Arabs *Jebel el Tur*, but by Christians the Mount of the Ascension. On its summit stands the Church of the Ascension, enclosing a chapel which is said to mark the spot from which our Saviour "was taken up" (Acts i:2). Beyond the Mount of the Ascension is another and still higher elevation, called *Viri Galilaei*, from a tradition that it was there that the angel said to the disciples, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" (Acts i:11). These four crests of the Mount of Olives rise on the east of Jerusalem; but beyond the city the height sweeps around to the west, and there, facing the northern wall, rises Mount Scopus, where Titus and his legions encamped for the great siege which ended in the utter destruction of the Holy City as Jesus had foretold. Closely fronting the city on the south, but separated from it by an intervening ravine, is the *Hill of Evil Counsel*, so called because of a tradition that on that hill the High Priest Caiaphas had a country house where he and the elders of the people took counsel together to put Jesus to death (John xi:47-53). On its summit stands a solitary tree which is a landmark to travellers approaching Jerusalem from the south; and at the foot of the ill-omened hill lies the Potter's Field, bought with the price of Christ's blood, which the murderers of Christ thought it not lawful to put into the treasury when the traitor Judas in despairing remorse cast it down at their feet (Matt. xxvii:3-20). Thus, on three sides at least, do



the mountains "stand round about Jerusalem;" southwest, too, there are hills, but of no great height. Between the city and its mountainous environment run two deep ravines; that on the north and east being the Valley of Jehoshaphat, otherwise called the Valley of the Brook Kedron; and that on the west and south being called the Valley of Hinnom. The modern name of the former is *Wady Sitti Mariam*, or the Valley of our Lady Mary; the modern name of the latter is *Wady el Rababi*, and these two ravines running together make the deep gorge which divides the Mount of Offence from the Hill of Evil Counsel. Within and almost surrounded by these valleys rises Jerusalem, itself of mountainous height though not so high as the Mount of Olives. The plateau upon which the Temple stood is 2441 feet above sea-level, while the Mount of the Ascension is 196 feet and Viri Galilaei is 282 feet higher. It was not the mountains standing round about it that made the situation of Jerusalem so strong against attack, but the deep gorges of Hinnom and the Kedron, from which the sides of the city rose in steep acclivities surmounted by lofty walls and towers. In looking at pictures and especially at photographs of Jerusalem it must be remembered that they invariably fail to show the steepness of these gorges, and so to impress us with the immense defensive strength of the position of Jerusalem in times when artillery was unknown.

Travellers approaching Jerusalem from the west, as they usually do, seldom feel greatly impressed by the aspect of the city. The general feeling is simply expressed by the remark of one, "I am strangely affected, but greatly disappointed!" Lieutenant Lynch however was astonished at the magnificence of his first

view of Jerusalem; but that was because unlike the great majority of travellers he approached it from the Jordan by the Jericho road through Bethany, and had his first view from the same spot from which Jesus first looked down upon Jerusalem. "No human being," says Dean Stanley, "could be disappointed who first saw Jerusalem from the east. The beauty consists in this: that you can then burst at once on the two great ravines which cut the city off from the surrounding table-land, and that then only you have a complete view of the Mosque of Omar. . . . From whatever point that graceful dome with its beautiful precinct emerges to view, it at once dignifies the whole city. And when from Olivet, or from the Governor's house, or from the northeast wall you see the platform on which it stands, it is a scene hardly to be surpassed."

On the same platform where the Mosque of Omar now stands, there, when our Saviour first gazed upon the same scene, stood the beautiful Temple of Herod. Where the followers of Mohammed now frequent the platform of the Haram, there were then to be seen thousands of the sons of Israel thronging to the great Feast of the Passover. The temple then gave solemnity and grandeur to a city not in itself impressive as the Mosque of Omar does now. Filled with the sentiment of sacred adoration and thankfulness, the pilgrims after their march from Jericho would gently descend the side of Olivet amid the gathering shades of evening. Leaving the wooded hillside, with the groves of olives and myrtle trees and pines and palms and fig trees with which this great park of Jerusalem was then covered, they would go down into the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Then proceeding a little

way northward, they would come to an enclosed garden called Gethsemane; and turning sharply to the left they would cross the Kedron which then flowed with water, and which has again begun to flow since the planting of trees upon the bare hills around. At length they would ascend the steep side of Mount Moriah, and passing where the gate called *Bab Sitti Mariam*,—or the Gate of our Lady Mary, also called St. Stephen's Gate,—now is, they would enter the Holy City. As they entered they would have on their left hand the Pool of Bethesda. The narrow and winding street they would first thread is now called the Via Dolorosa, the Street of Woe—the first street of Jerusalem—and perhaps the last—that the feet of Jesus of Nazareth ever trod.

## CHAPTER IX.

### ANCIENT JERUSALEM—PHYSICAL AND HISTORICAL.

THE object of the present study of Jerusalem is not to discuss antiquarian questions, nor any questions, but in a general and broad way to gain such a knowledge of the natural features of the place and of the growth and formation of the city as will enable us to picture to ourselves the scene of our Saviour's passion as it was when He visited and suffered in it, and also as it is in our own time. A well-instructed student of the Scriptures ought to have these things so clearly impressed upon his mind that if he should ever find himself at Jerusalem he would be able, without a guide, to go to any noted historical place of which the situation is certainly known. It has been proved by more than one experience that so much is possible; and although the reader of this book may not accomplish quite so much, he may expect to accomplish the most important parts of it. As our purpose is of this practical sort, we shall spend no time or space on matters of mere conjecture. In cases of doubt, the more probable opinion of the most recent and approved writers will be given, with a mere mention of the fact that other opinions are held.

We shall not then discuss the question of the derivation of the name of Jerusalem, concerning which there is no certainty. Neither shall we inquire whether Jeru-

salem is the ancient Salem of which Melchizedek was king (Gen. xiv : 18), nor whether that Salem was in the Plain of Jezreel, as St. Jerome declares that it was. Jerusalem evidently cannot be the Salem to which Jacob came, since that Salem was "a city of Shechem."

The place is first mentioned under the name of "the Jebusite," with the explanation that "the same is Jerusalem" (Josh. xv : 8). In the book of Judges it is called "Jebus, which is Jerusalem, the city of the Jebusites" (Judg. xix : 10, 11). It was so strongly fortified that, though the Israelites were successful in subduing the Canaanites of other mountain districts, the city of the Jebusites remained unconquered for centuries afterward. Not until the time of David did it fall permanently into the hands of the Israelites. It is true that we read in Judges i : 8 that the Israelites "fought against it, and took it and smote it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire;" but this, as Josephus explains, refers only to the lower city of which we shall hear presently, and not to the upper city, which was fortified both by nature and by art. The city of the Jebusites, properly so-called, was not taken at that time; and when David attempted to besiege it, the inhabitants were so confident of their security that they showed their scorn of the besieging force by manning their battlements with the lame and the blind. Thereupon, as Josephus affirms, David was greatly enraged, and proclaimed to his army that whoever should first scale the heights of the fortress and kill a Jebusite should be captain of the host. The brave men of the army made a simultaneous assault and Joab gained the promised reward. The city was taken and so became the City of David, B. C. 1046.

Jerusalem is situated in the midst of the mountainous table land which extends from the southern boundary of the Plain of Esdraelon southward to Hebron, and from the Ghor of the Jordan westward to the lower hills which form the eastern boundary of the Maritime Plain. Though Jerusalem was not the centre of the land, it was considerably more central than David's first capital at Hebron, and it lay as far north as he could go without leaving the boundaries of his ancestral tribe of Judah. In addition to this advantage and the natural strength of its position, Jerusalem lay beyond the usual track of the armies of Assyria and Egypt when these two nations were at war with each other. We have already seen that when Pharaoh Necho invaded Assyria by way of the Plains of Philistia and Sharon he was unable to understand what objection could be made to his line of march by a king who reigned, as Josiah did, at Jerusalem.

The natural features of the place, if once fixed in the memory, will make other descriptions easy of comprehension. Therefore those features must be clearly stated.

We have seen that along the north of Jerusalem and at some distance south of Mount Scopus there runs a comparatively shallow valley. At the northeast angle of the city the valley turns to the south and runs along the western foot of the Mount of Olives, close to the east side of the city, rapidly deepening as it goes to the south. This is the Kedron Valley, or the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

Along the western side of Jerusalem runs another valley of no great depth which is often called the Valley of Gihon. At the southwest of the city this valley turns sharply to the east in front of the Hill of Evil Counsel, deepening as it goes eastward to join the Valley of

Jehoshaphat in the deep gorge which divides the Hill of Evil Counsel from the Mount of Offence. This valley, or rather ravine, is the Valley of Hinnom.

By the Valleys of Gihon, Hinnom and the Kedron, Jerusalem is enclosed for three-fourths of its circumference.

There is another and lesser but notable ravine which runs from the junction of the Valleys of Jehoshaphat and Hinnom in a direction slightly west of north, so as to separate the southern part of the site of Jerusalem into two hills. This ravine is called the Tyropeon Valley, or the Valley of the Cheesemakers. The hill lying on the west of it is Mount Zion, the original city of the Jebusites, and later the city of David; the other is Mount Moriah, and is believed to be the spot on which Abraham prepared to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice (Gen. xxii : 2).

It is important to observe the suddenness of the descent of the two principal ravines. From their several starting-points to their junction on the southeast of the city, a distance of about a mile and a quarter only, there is a fall of more than 600 feet. Thus, to quote from a graphic description, "while on the north there is no material difference between the general level of the country outside the walls and that of the higher parts of the city, on the other three sides so steep is the fall of the ravines, so trench-like their character, and so close do they keep to the promontory at whose feet they run, as to leave on the beholder almost the impression of the ditch at the foot of a fortress rather than of valleys formed by nature." Between the two spurs which are separated by the Tyropeon Valley the depression is not

so great, though it is quite certain that by the accumulation of rubbish and ruins this valley or ravine is now much shallower than it was in ancient times.

Two other depressions which may perhaps originally have been deep enough to be called ravines remain to be mentioned. About midway of the western hill the Tyropeon Valley throws out a subordinate valley westward, thus separating it into two hills; and another similar subordinate valley runs, or certainly did formerly run, east and west on the northern part of the eastern hill.

Observing these natural divisions, we are now prepared to distinguish the southern part of the western hill as the Citadel of Zion, also called the Upper City, and the northern part as the Akra, or the Lower City. The central part of the eastern is Mount Moriah, the site of the Temple; the hill on the north of it is Bezetha; and the southern end of Mount Moriah is called Ophel. Of all these hills, the Citadel of Zion is considerably the highest. Its greatest elevation is 2535 feet above sea level; the highest point of Akra is 2482; of Bezetha, 2487; of the Temple area, 2432; and of Ophel, 2350; so that the general appearance of the surface is that of a slope downward from the southwest hill to Bezetha and Mount Moriah on the north and east, with a steeper slope to Ophel on the southeast. From the summit of Zion to the Pool of Siloam at the feet of Ophel the fall is 410 feet.

To speak of these divisions of Jerusalem in a little more detail, we may say of Mount Zion that it is undoubtedly the original city of the Jebusites which became the city of David, and afterward the Upper City or the upper market of Josephus. Here David built his palace,



and here for a thousand years not only the kings of Judah, but the foreign rulers who held possession of Jerusalem, resided. Here too was the sepulchre of David and of fourteen of his successors. As Zion was the first, so it was the last part of Jerusalem which owned the rule of Israel. After all the rest had fallen before the battering-rams of Titus—after even the fortress of the temple had been stormed—the last remnant of the Jews, crossing the bridges which then led from the Temple over the Tyropeon Valley to the Upper City, there renewed the conflict in the ancient keep of their kings and perished under the last banner of Israel that was ever raised in Jerusalem.

Though we are able to tell with entire satisfaction which of the divisions of Jerusalem is Mount Zion, it is less easy to ascertain its original boundaries, that is to say the lines of its defensive works. Even that however may be done approximately. The City of David included the whole of Mount Zion, and therefore a large part of the hill which lies without the modern wall on the south. The Tyropeon Valley, which has been filled up by the ruins of many devastations to a depth of 120 feet, must then have lain between two inaccessible steeps, and the frowning precipice on its western side was the eastern boundary of David's city. On the north the lesser valley thrown out westward from the Tyropeon was of considerable depth, and although it has now become entirely filled up, it was then the northern boundary of Zion. Where that valley once ran is now the Muristan, a wide vacant space within the city beginning not more than 300 paces from the Jaffa gate. In the Middle Ages it was the site of the Hospice of the Knights of St. John

and of the Convent of St. Mary. It is now merely an arable field.

Having thus ascertained the limits of the City of David, we can have no doubt of the general position of Akra, or the Lower City. It lay to the north of the branch of the Tyropeon by which it was separated from the Upper City of David. Josephus says that it was separated by a broad valley from the Temple Mount; but that the Asmonean princes levelled the summit of Akra and filled up the intervening valley. The Akra, then, must have included the greater part of the present Christian Quarter lying north of the Jaffa gate, and must almost certainly have included the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This is the reason why it seems to be impossible to accept the traditional scenes of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ as satisfactory, since it is absolutely certain that they lay without the walls of Jerusalem.

Two names occur in connection with ancient Jerusalem—*Millo* and *Silla*. The former is mentioned when David took the city from the Jebusites (2 Sam. v : 9), and it too was one of the great works of Solomon (1 Kings ix : 15). Hezekiah, also, "repaired Millo in the City of David" (2 Chron. xxxii : 5); and in Millo King Joash was murdered (2 Kings xii : 20). Yet we do not know what Millo was. The most satisfactory explanation, in Dr. Tristram's opinion, is that it was the ancient fortress or keep of Mount Zion, and that the name is a survival of Canaanitish times. Of *Silla*, which is named once in connection with Millo (2 Kings xii : 20), nothing whatever is known.

Several viaducts or bridges spanned the Tyropeon

from Zion to Mount Moriah. Remains of two of these, known respectively as Robinson's Arch and Wilson's Arch, have been discovered toward the south of the present Haram enclosure. But the present enclosure itself has no such appearance as it had before the time of Solomon. Then it was a distinct and separate hill, with the deep ravine of the Tyropeon dividing it from Mount Zion. Now it is rather the centre and highest portion of the eastern ridge. Then, too, it had a mound of rock rising in the centre of the ridge with a narrow platform on its crest. This was the old threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, which David purchased of him for an altar-place when the pestilence provoked by his sin had been stayed (2 Sam. xxiv : 10-25). It was around this central rock that Solomon afterward raised a vast platform, supported by massive piers and arches tier above tier and also by walls of stupendous masonry, for the great courts of his magnificent Temple. The interstices were filled in with stones and earth so that the whole platform was made solid, and the substructure was utilized for tanks and reservoirs and drains. The central rock is now called the Sakhra, and the immense platform wall of the Haram Area, as it is now called, enables us to identify the general positions of the sacred buildings of Solomon and the extent of Moriah on its northern side. It was separated from Bezetha by a valley now filled up. At the eastern end of this valley, and therefore at the northeast of Moriah, was the deep reservoir called the Pool of Bethesda; and at the northwest angle was the Tower of Antonia, the military key to the Temple-fortress.

Mount Moriah is almost beyond question the scene of

Abraham's offering of Isaac, his son; but the immediate cause of the selection of that spot for the site of the Temple was its consecration to the purposes of sacrifice after the staying of the pestilence in the time of David (1 Chron. xxi: 14-27). That the summit of the Mount was then occupied as a threshing-floor proves that it had not yet been included within the city.

The name of *Ophel* was applied to the low shoulder projecting from Mount Moriah toward the south. It extends to the Pool of Siloam at the junction of the Tyropeon and the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and terminates in a cliff overhanging the pool. The whole of it now lies without the city walls just south of the Haram enclosure, and is terraced for gardens, as the descent southward is very steep. In the time of Solomon, however, or soon afterward, Ophel must have been enclosed within the city, as we read that King Jotham "on the wall of Ophel built much" (2 Chron. xxvii: 3), and between the time of Solomon and Jotham it is not likely that there could have been any great extension of the city. Afterward Manasseh enlarged the city and "compassed about Ophel, and raised it to a very great height" (2 Chron. xxxiii: 14). Nehemiah also included it in the city as it was rebuilt after the captivity, and assigned it as the residence of the Nethinims or servants of the Temple (Neh. iii: 27). The eastern wall of Ophel has actually been discovered at a depth of seventy feet beneath the present surface, so vast has been the accumulation of rubbish in the many successive destructions of the sacred city. The ancient wall of Ophel is thus ascertained to have been a continuation, but at an oblique angle, of the eastern wall of the Temple platform. Sir C. Warren, who discovered

this wall, suggests that Ophel may have been the site of King Solomon's palace; but we need not enter into such matters of antiquarian research.

The latest addition to Jerusalem, that of *Bezetha*, is not mentioned in Holy Scripture at all, but it is precisely described by Josephus who says that as the population increased the inhabitants gradually crept beyond the walls, and the quarter north of the Temple was so advanced that it became necessary to take in the fourth hill of Bezetha, that is, *New Town*. It is separated from the fortress of Antonia, which stood at the northwest angle of the Temple platform, by a deep trench excavated in the solid rock, so as to strengthen Antonia and render it less accessible. It is important to remember that though Bezetha was thickly inhabited it was not surrounded by a wall until eight years after the crucifixion of our Saviour, when Herod Agrippa fortified it and included it within the walls of the city. If it had been a part of the more ancient city the traditional site of the Holy Sepulchre would have been absolutely impossible, as that site lay far within the third wall of Agrippa.

The importance of Jerusalem to Israel and the world is due less to the fact that it was the seat of Israelitish royalty than to the fact that it became the seat of the chosen Temple of God. Some description of the Temple and of the Tabernacle which preceded it will therefore be in order here.

The Temple was intended to replace the Tabernacle which Moses had used in the wilderness; and with all its magnificence its structure and measurements were a close copy of the light and fragile tent which was first devoted

to the most sacred mysteries of the Mosaic religion. The Tabernacle was erected by Moses in the desert of Sinai immediately after the promulgation of the law. It stood within an enclosure of curtains forming a double square fifty cubits or seventy-five feet in width by one hundred cubits or one hundred and fifty feet in length. The curtains were five cubits or seven and a half feet high, and were supported by pillars of brass at intervals of five cubits, to which they were attached by hooks of silver. On the eastern end of the enclosure was an entrance twenty cubits wide, which was closed by curtains of fine linen wrought with needlework and of gorgeous colors.

Within this area and toward the west of it stood the Tabernacle. It was a tent thirty cubits long by ten wide according to the account of Josephus, which corresponds with the account of the Bible (Exod. xxvi : 15-26) if we allow for the width of the corner-posts.

The Holy of Holies was a cubical chamber at the end of the Tabernacle, ten cubits square and ten cubits high. It contained the Mercy Seat, surmounted by the Cherubim, and the Ark of the Covenant in which were the Tables of the Law. Into these chambers not even the priest was allowed to enter except on extraordinary occasions.

In front of the Holy of Holies was an outer chamber called the Holy Place. It was ten cubits long by ten cubits wide and ten cubits high, and was appropriated to the use of the priests. In this outer chamber were placed the Golden Candlestick on one side, on the other the table of Shew Bread, and between them the Altar of Incense.

The roof of the Tabernacle was formed of several sets

of curtains, for the construction of which exceedingly minute directions were given by Moses (Exod. xxvi).

From Sinai to the Holy Land this Tabernacle was removed by the Israelites as they marched from place to place, and while the Canaanites remained unconquered it continued to be removed as occasion required. Finally it rested at Shiloh, "the place which God had chosen" (Josh. ix : 27 ; xviii : 1), and there it remained during the whole of the period of the Judges. It was the gathering-point for the heads of the fathers of the tribes (Josh. xix : 51), for councils of peace and war (Josh. xxii : 12 ; Judg. xxi : 12), and for annual solemn dances in which the women of Shiloh were conspicuous (Judg. xxi : 21). Then the religion of Israel fell into gradual degradation, and the conduct of the priests was sometimes shamelessly profligate. "The high places" too had a strange attraction for the people, and altars were set up in many parts of the country ; but still the Tabernacle held its repute as the House of God and the Temple of God in distinction from all lesser sanctuaries (1 Sam. i : 9, 24 ; iii : 3, 15). It was perhaps not a misfortune that when the worship of Jehovah was degenerating into a condition little better than the idolatrous worship of the heathen, the Ark of God was taken in battle by the Philistines. It was eventually recovered, but it was not restored to the Tabernacle. For a time it was settled under King Saul at Nob, a city whose site has not been ascertained but which has been plausibly supposed to be the northernmost crest of the ridge of Olivet, north of the *Viri Galilaei* and east of *Scopus*. In some way the Tabernacle came to be set up at Gibeon (1 Chron. xvi : 39 ; 1 Kings iii : 4), and when Jerusalem was captured and a new

Tabernacle was erected there containing the Ark of the Covenant (2 Sam. vi : 17) the ancient Tabernacle still continued to be the place of sacrifice, while the new was a place of worship in songs and psalms under the direction of Asaph (1 Chron. xvi : 4, 37, 39 ; xxi : 29). This divided worship continued throughout the reign of David, and the sanctity of both places was acknowledged by Solomon at his accession (1 Kings iii : 15 : 2 Chron. i : 3).

It was the great glory of the reign of Solomon that he was permitted to unite the sanctity and the ceremonies of the two tabernacles in the Temple of Jerusalem. On the summit of Mount Moriah a platform was cleared, and within an area corresponding with the outer court of the Tabernacle a building was erected of proportions closely resembling those of the Tabernacle, though the dimensions were much greater. The ground-plan of the Temple measured eighty cubits by forty, and the height was thirty cubits,—not a large building certainly, nor very imposing if this were all that is known about it. But we are told (2 Chron. iii : 4) that the height perhaps only of the porch was one hundred and twenty cubits, or one hundred and eighty feet, which is an enormous height for any building ; and such a porch would be out of all proportion to a building of only forty-five feet high. But we are further told (2 Chron. iii : 9) that Solomon overlaid the *upper chambers* with gold, and elsewhere we read (2 Kings xxiii : 12) of altars on the top of the *upper chambers*. It is evident then, that above the lower temple there must have been a superstructure, and both Josephus and the Talmud make the same assertion, adding that the superstructure was of equal height with the lower building. Thus the height of the Temple as seen







from without would be not thirty but sixty cubits, or ninety feet. Such an edifice with its façade of one hundred and eighty feet would be a noble and impressive piece of architecture. We need not further detail its special features, since the Temple of Solomon was burned down by the army of Nebuchadnezzar at the time of the captivity (2 Chron. xxxvi : 19).

The Temple of Zerubbabel, built after the captivity, was probably of the same length as the Temple of Solomon and it was of the same height of sixty cubits, but it was wider by twenty cubits having a width of sixty cubits (Ezra vi : 3). This Temple stood until the time of Herod, and was by him repaired and adorned rather than rebuilt.

Of the Temple of Herod, as it was properly called, we can learn nothing from the New Testament ; but the Talmud and the writings of Josephus furnish us with all the information we require. Herod greatly enlarged the area within which the Temple stood, so as to make it a great square of six hundred feet on each side. The Temple area thus became the principal defence of the city on the east. On that side there were no gates or openings, and being situated on a sort of rocky brow it was at all subsequent times considered impregnable from the eastward. The north side too, besides the fortress of Antonia, became part of the defences of the city, and was likewise without gates. On the south side, which was enclosed by the wall of Ophel, there were double gates nearly in the centre. On the west there were four gateways. In the time of Solomon, and until the area was enlarged by Herod, the ascent to the Temple from the western valley seems to have been by an external flight

of stairs (Neh. xii : 37 ; 1 Kings x : 5) ; but when the Temple came to be fortified a bridge and causeway were built over the Tyropeon Valley to connect the Temple area with the upper city of Zion.

The Temple of Herod was similar if not identical in arrangement and dimensions to that of Zerubbabel, but Herod surrounded the Temple area with cloisters or porches which from an architectural point of view were most magnificent. Before his time it is probable that there was a porch called Solomon's porch on the eastern side, but on the other three sides Herod's addition was exclusively his own. On the west, north and east sides the cloisters were composed of double rows of Corinthian pillars twenty-five cubits or thirty-seven and a half feet in height, with flat roofs resting against the outer walls of the Temple area. These cloisters however were greatly inferior to the royal porch which overhung the southern wall. Outwardly, that is to say on the southern side, this magnificent portico was closed by the wall ; inwardly, on the side nearest the Temple, it was open. From east to west it extended six hundred feet, in three broad aisles divided by rows of lofty columns, the middle aisle being forty-five feet wide and the other two aisles being thirty feet wide. To the porches surrounding the Temple area Gentiles were admitted, but at a little distance within was a marble fence or screen four or five feet high, beautifully ornamented with carving and bearing inscriptions in Greek and Latin which forbade any Gentile to pass within its boundaries.

A short distance within this screen was a flight of steps leading up to a platform or terrace fifteen cubits above the level of the floor of the southern cloister. Still a

little further within, a flight of five or six steps led up to the sacred enclosure of the Temple itself which was called Chel; and the eastern part of this inner enclosure was the Court of the Women, the dimensions of which are variously estimated.

The glory of the inner courts of the Temple was their gateways, and especially the eastern gate of the Court of the Women. It was strongly fortified and richly ornamented with carving and gilding, and had apartments over it, so as to resemble the Gopura of an Indian temple more than any other architectural structure. This was in all probability "The Beautiful Gate" mentioned in the New Testament (Acts iii : 2).

On the west of the Women's Court and on a still higher level was the Court of Israel, and within that again was the Court of the Priests, surrounded with a portico and having the Great Altar standing in the midst in front of the Temple. Within this last enclosure, west of the Great Altar of Burnt Offering and on a level yet loftier, stood the Temple itself, of the same dimensions as that of Zerubbabel but far more elaborately ornamented. It was fronted on the east by a magnificent façade, behind which was the Holy Place, and at the extreme west was the Holy of Holies. It seems to be idle to attempt to ascertain with any exactness the details of this wonderful structure; but whatever they may have been, "it may safely be asserted that the triple Temple of Jerusalem—the Lower Court, standing on its magnificent terraces—the Inner Court, standing in the centre of this—and the Temple itself rising out of this group and crowning the whole—must have formed, when combined with the beauty of its situation, one of the

most splendid architectural combinations of the ancient world."

To resume the history of Jerusalem:—

Under Rehoboam, the hot-headed son of Solomon, not only was the kingdom of Israel separated from the kingdom of Judah by a schism which was never healed, but Jerusalem itself was speedily desolated by the hand of a foreign invader. In the year 973 B. C. Shishak, King of Egypt, "came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the House of the Lord, and the treasures of the King's House; he took all" (2 Chron. xii: 9).

In the reign of Amaziah, who rashly challenged Jehoash, King of Israel, to battle, a great defeat of the southern kingdom was followed by the surrender of Jerusalem to the victorious Jehoash. The southern wall to the extent of six hundred feet was dismantled in order to keep the city at the mercy of its powerful neighbor, and so Jehoash returned to Samaria with the plunder of Temple and palace, and with hostages from Amaziah (2 Kings xiv: 8-15). In the reign of Uzziah the fortifications of the city had been restored, and were strengthened by towers (2 Chron. xxvi: 9); Jotham "built much," as we have already seen, on the wall of Ophel (2 Chron. xxvii: 3); Hezekiah improved the water-supply by aqueducts from the upper pool of Gihon (2 Chron. xxxii: 30); Manasseh immensely increased the circuit of the walls. By these successive improvements Jerusalem was enabled to hold out against Nebuchadnezzar during a siege of eighteen months, at the end of which it was captured and sacked. Most of the inhabitants were put to the sword without distinction of age or sex, and those who escaped from slaughter were carried captives to Babylon. The

Temple was plundered and burnt and the wall of the city was broken down (2 Kings xxv; 2 Chron. xxxvi; Jer. xxxix).

The restoration of the Temple by the original command of Cyrus the Great is the subject of the first part of the Book of Ezra. It was begun in 536 B. C., but was almost immediately suspended by order of Artaxerxes on account of the alleged rebellious character of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. At length by a new decree of Darius the work was resumed, and in the year 519 B. C. it was completed, to the great delight of the Jews (Ezra i: 7).

The first six chapters of Nehemiah give an account of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem in troublous times, and of its completion B. C. 445. Thenceforward the Jews were loyal subjects of the Persian monarchs, and an apocryphal story is told to the effect that when Alexander the Great was advancing against the Persians he went to Jerusalem with the intention of capturing it. On his approach, however, Jaddua, who was High Priest at that time, went forth to meet the Macedonian, clad in the vestments of his office and attended by a train of priests and Levites. In Jaddua, the story runs, Alexander recognized a figure which had appeared to him in a dream bidding him go forth and conquer; therefore he at once saluted the High Priest and left the city in peace.

At the distribution of Alexander's empire among his generals Judah was claimed by Ptolemy, who marched upon Jerusalem, and surprising the garrison by an attack on the Sabbath day captured the city, B. C. 320. As usual, the Temple and the city were plundered, and

Ptolemy carried thousands of the inhabitants to his capital of Alexandria, where he granted them many privileges and gave them a rank second only to that of his own Macedonians. In his subsequent wars with Syria Jerusalem was singularly spared, and in 302 B. C. its possession was confirmed to Egypt.

So it remained in peaceful subjection to the Grecian kingdom of the Ptolemies for one hundred years, and when wars broke out between Syria and Egypt, Jerusalem for a time escaped the horrors of war. In 211 B. C., however, Ptolemy Philopator was guilty of a sacrilege which he had cause to repent. He entered the sanctuary of the Temple, but there encountered a vision before which he fled in terror. To his resentment of the fright which he then experienced is attributed his subsequent barbarous treatment of the Jewish inhabitants of Alexandria.

At length the tide of war turned so that Jerusalem submitted to Antiochus, and for some time the city was treated with clemency and kindness by its Syrian ruler. On the accession of Seleucus to the throne, however, he was disposed to take a harsher course. He sent his treasurer to carry off the sacred vessels and treasures of the Temple; but, like Philopator, the unhappy treasurer encountered a vision in the Temple before which he too fled, leaving his commission unperformed. Under Antiochus Epiphanes a serious attempt was made to turn the Jews from their ancient religion. Menelaus, a semi-pagan priest, was appointed High Priest; but a report of the king's death reaching Jerusalem in the year 169 B. C., the people rose in mass and drove Menelaus out of the city. This insurrection was severely punished. Two



years later Jerusalem was plundered and dismantled, the Temple was again profaned, the sacrifices were discontinued, and the statue of Jupiter Olympus was set up in the Holy Place.

These intolerable enormities were the cause of the heroic struggle of the Maccabees. Gaining victory after victory over the Syrians, they were able in four years, that is in B. C. 163, to restore the Temple; but the citadel of Zion was still held by the enemy, and was not finally surrendered for twenty-one years. The Maccabean princes fortified the Temple with a strength it had never before had, making their own residence in the tower of Baris, which was afterward called Antonia, and which stood at the northwest angle of the Temple area.

For another hundred years Jerusalem remained undisturbed, until dissensions among the Maccabees brought Roman intervention. Then in B. C. 63 Pompey advanced upon it, took it, put 12,000 of the people to the sword in the courts of the Temple, and yet left the sacred vessels and the treasures of the Temple undisturbed. The avaricious Crassus twelve years later was less cruel to the people, but plundered the Temple thoroughly of all its treasures.

In 43 B. C. began the golden age of Jerusalem as a city of strength and splendor, since in that year began the Herodian improvements under Antipater, father of Herod the Great. But internal discords led to an intervention of the Parthians B. C. 40, and in B. C. 37 Herod with the aid of the Romans captured the city after a gallant defence. The Jews held out to the uttermost, retiring from point to point until the last defenders were subdued in the Tower of Baris. Herod immediately set

about a complete refortification and embellishment of Jerusalem. The fortifications were greatly improved; Baris was rebuilt in greater strength than before and was called Antonia; on the west of the city, south of the present Jaffa Gate, was built the citadel with its three Towers of Hippicus, Phasaelus and Mariamne, of which (probably) the first remains under the name of the Tower of David. Herod erected a town hall, and also, according to custom, a theatre. Near the citadel he had his own palace and his gardens. Needless to say that his greatest work of all was the restoration of the Temple, as already described. Pliny writes of Jerusalem at that time that it was "by far the most magnificent of the cities of the Orient, and not merely of Judea."

After the death of Christ, Agrippa I. erected a wall, commonly called the Third Wall, which enclosed the whole of the northern suburb of Bezetha within the city. This wall is said to have been extremely strong, being built of huge stones and being defended by no less than ninety towers. The strongest of these was Psephinus at the northwest angle, which is said to have been one hundred feet in height. Agrippa did not complete his wall, for fear of incurring the displeasure of the Emperor Claudius; but it was afterwards finished by the Jews in a less substantial manner than that in which it had been begun. Its very course is now unknown.

The time of ruin which Jesus foretold came on in A. D. 70, when Jerusalem was once again "compassed about with armies," and after a siege by Titus, the horrors of which have never been surpassed, it was utterly destroyed.

The following brief but excellent account of events which led up to the siege of Jerusalem is taken from Baedeker:

“Ever since the land had become a Roman province a storm had begun to brood in the political atmosphere, for the Jews were quite as much swayed by national pride as the Romans. The country was moreover disquieted by roving marauders (*sicarii*), and several of the Roman governors were guilty of grave acts of oppression, as for instance Gessius Florus, who appropriated the treasures of the Temple. At this time there were two antagonistic parties at Jerusalem; the fanatical Zealots under Eleazer, who advocated revolt against the Romans, and a more moderate party under the High Priest Ananias. Florus in his indiscriminating rage having caused many unoffending Jews to be put to death, a fearful insurrection broke out in the city. Herod Agrippa II. and his sister Berenice endeavored to pacify the insurgents and to act as mediators, but were obliged to seek refuge in flight. The Zealots had already gained possession of the Temple precincts, and the Castle of Antonia was now also occupied by them. A wild struggle now ensued between the two Jewish parties, and the stronger faction of the Zealots succeeded in wresting the upper part of the city from their opponents, and even in capturing the Castle of Herod, which was garrisoned by 3000 men. The victors treated the captured Romans and their own countrymen with equal barbarity. Cestius Gallus, an incompetent general, now besieged the city, but when he had almost achieved success he gave up the siege and withdrew toward the north, to Gibeon. His camp was then attacked by the Jews and his army dispersed. This victory so elated the Jews that they imagined they could now entirely shake off the Roman yoke. The newly constituted council of Jerusalem, com-

posed of Zealots, accordingly proceeded to organize an insurrection throughout the whole of Palestine. The Romans, however, now fully alive to the seriousness of the danger, despatched their able general Vespasian with 60,000 men to Palestine. This army first quelled the insurrection in Galilee (A. D. 67). Meanwhile the conflicts within Jerusalem itself continued. Bands of robbers took possession of the Temple, and when besieged by Ananias summoned to their aid the Idumeans (Edomites), the ancient hereditary enemies of the Jews. To these auxiliaries the gates were thrown open, and with their aid the moderate party, with Ananias its leader, was annihilated. The adherents of that party were proscribed, and no fewer than 12,000 persons of noble family are said to have perished on this occasion. The Zealots committed frightful excesses, and made common cause with the robbers, while the Idumeans, having sated themselves with plunder, quitted Jerusalem."

It was not until Vespasian had conquered a good part of Palestine that he advanced upon Jerusalem; but events at Rome compelled him to entrust the continuation of the campaign to his son Titus. When the latter approached Jerusalem there were no fewer than four hostile parties within its walls. The Zealots under John of Giscala occupied the Castle of Antonia and the Court of the Gentiles, while the robber party under Simon of Gerasa held the upper part of the city; Eleazer's party were in possession of the Court of Israel and the inner Temple; and lastly, the moderate party, which had again risen, was also established in the upper part of the city. Titus marched from Egypt with two legions, each of about 6000 men; three legions were already on the spot;

and to these he added another legion and numerous auxiliaries. Thus, at the beginning of April, A. D. 70, six legions were assembled in the environs of Jerusalem. While reconnoitering the position of the place Titus narrowly escaped being cut off from his army. He then posted the main body of his forces to the north and northwest of the city, while one legion occupied the Mount of Olives. The Jews attempted a sally against the latter but were driven back by Titus, who hastened to its aid. In the course of the conflicts which still continued within the city John of Giscala succeeded in driving Eleazer from the inner precincts of the Temple, but he was still opposed by the robber party under Simon. On April 23d the besieging engines were brought up by the Romans to the west wall of the new town (perhaps near the present Jaffa Gate). The Jews defended themselves bravely, but on the 7th of May the Romans effected an entrance into the new town.

Five days later Titus endeavored to storm the second wall but was repulsed. Three days afterward he succeeded in taking it, and then he caused the whole north side of the wall to be demolished. He then sent Josephus, who was in his camp, to summon the Jews to surrender, but in vain. A famine soon set in, and those of the besieged who endeavored to escape from it and from the barbarities of Simon were crucified by the Romans. The besiegers next began to erect walls of attack, but the Jews partially succeeded in destroying them. Titus then caused the city wall, which was thirty-three stadia in length, to be surrounded by a wall of thirty-nine stadia in length. Thus the city was completely surrounded; the severity of the famine was greatly aggravated; many

perished and the bodies of the dead were thrown over the wall by the besieged. Again the battering rams were brought into requisition, and at length, on the night of July 5th, the wall was stormed. A fierce contest took place around the gates of the Temple, which the Jews continued to hold with the utmost tenacity. By degrees the colonnades of the Temple were burned down; yet every foot was stubbornly contested. At last on the 10th of August a Roman soldier, contrary it is said to the command of Titus, cast a firebrand into the Temple; the sacred edifice was burned to the ground, and those who escaped the flames were cut down by the swords of the Romans. A body of Zealots however contrived to force their way to the upper part of the city. While the lower part of the city was actually in flames negotiations were again opened for a surrender, but in vain. The upper part resisted stubbornly, and it was not until the 7th of September that it too was burned down. Jerusalem was now a heap of ruins. Those of the surviving citizens who had fought against the Romans were put to death, the rest were sold as slaves. On his return to Rome Titus celebrated a magnificent triumph together with his father Vespasian, and John of Giscala was led as captive in the triumphal show. The noble arch of Titus at Rome was erected to commemorate this victory, which forever destroyed the political importance of Jerusalem.

Thus the City of David and Solomon and Hezekiah and Herod was reduced to utter ruin. The inhabitants were literally extirpated. The whole wall, except on the western side, was demolished. Only three of all the towers were left standing. To prevent the re-occupation of the place by Jews, Cæsar's famous Tenth Legion

was left as a garrison over the ruins. So it remained, peaceful with the peace of the desert, until A. D. 131 when Hadrian ordered it to be rebuilt. Simultaneously occurred the great rebellion of the pretended Messiah, Bar-Cochebas, which was utterly suppressed in 135. From that year some historians have thought we ought to date the final dispersion of the Jews from their own land, so ruthlessly unsparing was the hand which drove them out. In Jerusalem a Roman colony was established, and within its limits no Jew was allowed to enter. On Mount Moriah a Temple to Jupiter Capitolinus was erected, and the new city was called Aelia Capitolina, a name which it continued to bear for centuries. It was so called by a Christian Council held in 536, and so even Mohammedans called it until after the Crusades, when they gave it the name of *El Khuds*, or the Holy.

In less than two hundreds years from the foundation of the new city of Aelia Capitolina on the site of ancient Jerusalem the Roman Empire had become Christian, and in 326 the Empress Helena, mother of Constantine, visited in her eightieth year the holy places of the Christian religion. So extensive were her works of piety in the building of churches and convents, that when the origin of any building that can be at all referred to that time is unknown the monkish historians invariably fall back upon the Empress Helena as its foundress. Nine years after the visit of Helena the Emperor Constantine founded the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the site of a Temple of Venus which tradition pointed out as the place of Christ's burial. There too was discovered the True Cross. Three crosses were said to have been found at the same spot, two of which were at once understood

to be those of the thieves who were crucified with our Lord. To distinguish the True Cross of Christ from the crosses of the thieves was perfectly simple. A number of sick people were brought to the place and made to touch the three crosses successively ; in every instance it was found that when they touched two of the three crosses they remained unrelieved, but that when they touched the third they were forthwith healed of whatsoever disease they had. The conclusion was irresistible that the healing cross was indeed the Cross of Christ. Naturally many persons wished to have a fragment of the wood of the True Cross, and the wish was granted to such an extent that the wood thus given away must have been many times as great as the original quantity contained in the cross itself. This, however, was easily explained by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, who affirmed that the wood of the True Cross was like that of the burning bush, and was not at all diminished by the fragments which were taken from it. Like the widow's barrel of meal it was not wasted, but day by day was found to be of the same proportions as it was when first it was discovered.

The apostate Emperor Julian repealed the law which prohibited the Jews from entering Jerusalem, and rather to spite the Christians than to gratify the Jews, he gave orders for the Temple to be rebuilt. The work was accordingly begun, but by the death of Julian in 362 it came to an abrupt conclusion and again the Jews were excluded from the city of their fathers. Throughout the fifth century and for centuries afterward Jerusalem was thronged by a never-ceasing stream of pilgrims from all parts of the Christian world, and the Bishop of Jerusalem, or rather of Aelia Capitolina for so he was called,



was promoted to the ecclesiastical rank of a Patriarch of equal degree with the Patriarchs of Rome, Constantinople and Antioch. In 527 Justinian built a magnificent Church of the Virgin on Mount Moriah, and many convents and hospices for the entertainment of pilgrims to the Holy City.

In 614 a great disaster befell. The Persians defeated the forces of the Emperor Heraclius and took possession of Jerusalem. There was a merciless slaughter of the inhabitants, and the Patriarch of Jerusalem, together with the notables of the city and the True Cross, were carried off. The next year however peace was made by the contending parties; the prisoners were released, and the Emperor Heraclius himself insisted on bearing back the Cross on his own shoulders to the place whence it had been taken.

In 636 the Khalif Omar attacked Jerusalem, and after a stubborn resistance it surrendered in the following year. The cross fell before the crescent, and the beautiful Church of Justinian was converted into the Mosque of Omar which still crowns the Holy Mount of Moriah. During the following centuries the Christian pilgrims who thronged the Holy Places, which were now in possession of the infidels, were subjected to continual insults and to the degrading payment of a poll-tax of so much per head. The indignation throughout all Christendom smouldered for ages until the time came for it to break out in the romantic episode of the Crusades. In 960 the sovereignty of the Holy Land was transferred from the Khalifs of Bagdad to the Fatimite Khalifs of Egypt; but in 1073 the Turkomans, having seized the eastern Khalifate, took possession of the Holy Land likewise. The

cruelties of these barbarians to Christian pilgrims exceeded all bounds, and the first Crusade began ; but before Godfrey de Bouillon appeared before the walls of Jerusalem the Egyptian Khalifs had resumed possession and it was with them therefore that Godfrey had to contend. The siege lasted forty days, and on the 15th of July, 1099, the Christians entered Jerusalem. Their conduct was little worthy of the followers of Jesus Christ, for they put to the sword all the inhabitants of the city, sparing neither old men, women nor infants at the breast. Godfrey was elected King of Jerusalem. The Mosque of Omar was again turned into a Christian church, and was made the Cathedral of the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Thenceforward for eighty-eight years the Holy City was, in name at least, a Christian city.

In 1187 the great Saladin recaptured Jerusalem from the Christians. In 1192 he was threatened with a siege by the English Richard Cœur de Lion, and Saladin fortified the town strongly ; but in 1219 it was wholly dismantled by Sultan Melek el Moaddin of Damascus. In 1229 it was delivered to the Emperor Frederick II. on condition that it should not again be fortified. Ten years later however fortifications were begun contrary to the stipulation, and this breach of good faith was severely punished. The Emir David of Kerek advanced upon it and seized it, cast down the works which had already been erected and strangled the inhabitants. In 1243 it was again surrendered, this time unconditionally, to the Christians ; and the fortifications were again renewed, but only to fall shortly into Moslem hands. At length, after so many vicissitudes, Jerusalem came under the dominion of the Turkish sovereign, Selim I., and the present fortifications

are the work of Suleyman the Magnificent. According to an inscription which appears over the Jaffa Gate they were erected in 1542. From that time almost without intermission Jerusalem has remained under Turkish rule. In 1832 it fell, without a siege, into the hands of Mehemet Ali, Pasha of Egypt. Two years later an insurrection broke out and the city was seized by the insurgents, but on the approach of Ibrahim Pasha the gates were thrown open and the insurrection was speedily put down. In 1841 Mehemet Ali was deprived of his Syrian dominions by command of the Great Powers of Europe, and Jerusalem reverted to the Turks, in whose possession it still remains.

## CHAPTER X.

### ANCIENT JERUSALEM—THE WALLS, TOWERS, GATES AND WATER-SUPPLY.

THE rapid sketch of the history of Jerusalem, given in the previous chapter, has been purposely inserted before any attempt to give an account of the ancient walls of the city, because, after so many destructions and rebuildings, the reader will perceive how impossible it must be to speak of that subject with any confidence. The best informed authorities differ from each other in important particulars. In general terms then, we may be content to say that the first wall included the Upper City of Zion, and probably extended much to the south of the present wall which leaves a large part of the hill outside of the modern city. That it extended on the east along the border of the deep Tyropeon ravine may also be assumed as certain. Its course on the west probably coincided with the present wall. Of its northern line we have already in the preceding chapter said all that need be said. Of the later fortifications little is certain, except that the second wall included at least the Akra or the Lower City and the Temple area, and probably the lower ridge of Ophel. Concerning the northern line of the second wall the controversy is especially bitter, because it involves the correctness of the traditional site of the sepulchre of our Saviour. We know that He was

crucified *outside* the wall of the city, and that He was laid in a new tomb near by, which was also of course outside the wall. But the traditional site is *within* the present wall; in fact, it is in the heart of the town. The question therefore is, whether the wall, at the time of Christ, did or did not include that spot within the city. Roman Catholics and Oriental Christians think it did not, but the weight of evidence and argument is in favor of the belief that the wall at that time did include this spot, and therefore that it cannot be the place of our Saviour's death, burial and resurrection. The third wall of Agrippa took in not only the hill of Bezetha, but a large space lying north of the second wall. Its precise course cannot now be traced.

Of the towers of Jerusalem we know little more than of the walls. Only two can be identified with reasonable certainty.

At the extreme west of the north wall of the Temple area, and of course without the area, was a tower originally called Baris. Of all the defences of the city it was the part which held out longest against Herod and the Romans, B. C. 37. Herod refortified it and called it Antonia. It is thus described by Josephus: "It was erected upon a rock of fifty cubits in height and was on a great precipice. In the first place, the rock itself was covered over with smooth pieces of stone from the foundation upward, and that not only for ornament but that if any one should try to scale it he might find no resting-place for his feet. Next to this, and before you came to the Tower itself, was a wall three cubits high, and within that wall all the space of the Tower of Antonia itself was built upon to the height of forty cubits. The inward

parts had the extent and form of a palace, being divided into rooms with all kinds of conveniences, such as courts and places for bathing. By its magnificence it seemed to be a palace, but its entire structure was that of a tower, and it had four distinct towers at its four corners. Three of these were fifty cubits high, but that at the southeast corner was seventy cubits high, and from thence the whole Temple might be viewed. Where Antonia joined with the cloisters of the Temple there were passages leading to both, so that the soldiers of the Roman legion, which always occupied Antonia as a guard, could enter the cloisters and prevent any disorder among the people." On the site of Antonia now stands the Turkish Infantry Barracks.

Just below the Jaffa Gate is the Citadel of Jerusalem. It is an irregular group of five square towers, originally surrounded by a moat, part of which is still preserved. The substructure of the masonry consists of large blocks of stones and rises to a height of thirty-nine feet from the bottom of the moat. The position of the citadel corresponds with that of the Tower of Hippicus (and Phasaelus) as described by Josephus, and one of its towers was early called by the Crusaders the Tower of David. It was probably built by Herod whose palaces and gardens were to the south of it; and at the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus this tower alone may have been left standing as a fortress for the Tenth Legion which was left at the ruins. It is thus described by Col. Wilson: "The Tower of David appears to be the oldest portion of the citadel, and its dimensions and mode of construction agree well with those of the Tower Phasaelus as described by Josephus. The substructure consists of

a solid masonry escarp, rising from the bottom of the ditch at an angle of about forty-five degrees with a pathway round the top. Above this the tower rises in a solid mass for a height of twenty-nine feet and then comes the superstructure. The escarp retains to some extent its original appearance, but time and hard treatment have worn away much of the finer work and the repairs have been executed in the usual slovenly manner of the Turks. The old work, where it can be seen, is equal if not superior to the best specimens of masonry in the far-famed Temple Platform; the faces of the stones are dressed with an astonishing degree of fineness, and the whole when perfect must have presented a smooth surface difficult to escalate, and from the solidity of the mass unassailable to the battering-ram. The superstructure contains several chambers and a cistern for the collection of rain-water. In one of the rooms a *mihrab* marks the place where, according to Moslem tradition, David composed the Psalms; and another chamber is pointed out as the reception room of the same king. The Tower of David was the last place to hold out when Jerusalem was captured by the Crusaders; and when the city walls were destroyed by the Moslems in the thirteenth century, it was for some reason—probably its solidity—spared, to come down to our time as a fine example of mural masonry of the Jews.”

It is interesting to know that on the land once occupied by the palace and gardens of Herod on the east and southeast of the Tower of Hippicus there are now a hospital, an English church and parsonage, a school, and the residence of an English bishop.

Since it is impossible to trace the course of the walls

of Jerusalem, it must be equally impossible to locate the twenty-three gates which are mentioned in Holy Scripture. The Fountain Gate was doubtless on the south, near the Pool of Siloam. The Gate of the Valley, before the Dragon Well (Neh. ii : 13), was opposite the Pool of Gihon at the northwest end of Zion, "probably," says Dr. Tristram, "a little north of the present Jaffa Gate." The Dung Gate is placed by tradition at the southeast of the City of David.

A more interesting subject is that of the water supply of Jerusalem, the importance of which to a city which was destined to undergo so many protracted sieges cannot be exaggerated. The care taken to provide an un-failing supply was very great, and it is by the explorations made in investigating this part of the topography of the city that the old Jerusalem of David and Solomon has been laid bare to modern research. We may here in the main safely follow the account of Dr. Tristram.

The Roman historian Tacitus speaks of Jerusalem as a fountain of never-failing waters, and as mountains hollowed beneath the surface into cisterns. That description is correct. The supply of water was threefold—from springs, tanks and aqueducts. The chief reservoirs were under Mount Moriah, and into them the lowest of the three aqueducts from Solomon's Pools to this day conveys a never-failing stream. They are estimated to have had a united capacity of 10,000,000 gallons, and one of them singly must have contained 2,000,000 gallons. But before proceeding further we must look at the famous pools from which they were replenished.

About four miles to the southwest of Bethlehem is *Burak*, otherwise called Solomon's Pools. Near by is a



large square building with corner towers and dating in its present form from the seventeenth century. It is still garrisoned by a few Turkish soldiers. Less than two hundred paces to the west of this castle is a small door leading to a sealed spring to which reference is made perhaps in Canticles iv : 12, where the bridegroom says of the bride : " A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse ; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." This spring is doubly enclosed and sealed with solid rock. Through the door in the hillside we enter a vaulted chamber, and to the right of it is a smaller chamber at the end of which the spring bubbles forth. The beautifully clear water is collected in a basin from which it is conducted by a channel to the first of the " pools."

The pools are situated in a small valley lying at the back of the castle and sloping toward the east. The first and highest of them is bounded on the west side by the road which leads from Jerusalem to Hebron. This pool is 127 yards long ; at the upper or west end it is 76 yards wide ; at the lower end it is 79 yards wide. The second pool is 53 yards east of the first and is about 19 feet lower. It is 141 yards long, by 53 yards wide at the upper end and 83 yards at the lower end. The third pool is 52 yards east of the middle pool, and its level is 19 feet lower. Its length is 194 yards, by 49 yards wide at the upper end and 69 yards at the lower. The depth of the upper pool is 25 feet ; of the middle pool, 39 feet ; of the lower pool, 50 feet. All three are mainly hewn out of the solid rock, though they are partly lined with masonry and the inner walls are supported by buttresses. The lowest pool was always emptied first, and was filled again from the middle pool,

which in like manner was filled from the upper. They were fed from the sealed fountain and several other springs in the neighborhood. A bountiful supply was furnished by means of pipes and aqueducts to Bethlehem and Hebron as well as Jerusalem. To Jerusalem it was conducted by solidly built aqueducts at three different levels, the lowest of which was so completely concealed from detection that if the highest, or even the second, was discovered and cut off by an invading enemy, the third would still furnish an ample supply. To this day the water flows in the lower aqueducts, and reaches Jerusalem under the Mosque of Omar, flowing into the same reservoirs, now much out of repair, which existed under the Temple. Whether these pools and the aqueducts which connect them with Jerusalem were really the work of King Solomon is a matter of dispute, and strange to say they are also attributed to Pontius Pilate. It is beyond dispute that Pilate brought upon himself the execrations of the Jews by taking from the Temple Treasury the money required for the building, or at least the repair and renewal, of extensive water-works for the city; but it seems to be incredible that he should have excavated those pools themselves without some mention being made of so immense a work. Prior to the time of Christ there is no personage in Jewish history to whom the construction of the pools can be ascribed with so much inherent probability as the great King Solomon. The rabbis of the Mishna are explicit in declaring that he made gardens at Etham, which is near by the pools, and conveyed the waters thence to Jerusalem; and the writer of Ecclesiastes probably alludes to the same fact in these words, "I made me gardens and orchards, and

I planted trees of all kinds of fruits ; I made me pools of water to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees" (Eccl. ii : 5, 6).

Perhaps the "high-level" aqueduct which brought water at so high a level as to deliver it to the lofty streets of Mount Zion was as great a work as the pools and aqueducts of Solomon. It was a truly astonishing piece of engineering, starting from a glen called *Wady Byar*, south of Solomon's pools, and proceeding at a great depth till it flowed into a tank near Jerusalem, into which its water was delivered to be afterward carried to the Holy City by means of an inverted siphon, two miles long, over the valley in which is Rachel's Tomb. One remarkable fact has been ascertained, namely, that this aqueduct finally delivered its water at a point not less than twenty feet higher than the present sill of the Joppa Gate. It was probably constructed by Herod, and it well accords with the magnificence of his reign ; but it may conceivably have been constructed by Pontius Pilate. In either case it must have existed in our Lord's time and been familiar to Him as one of the wonders of Jerusalem.

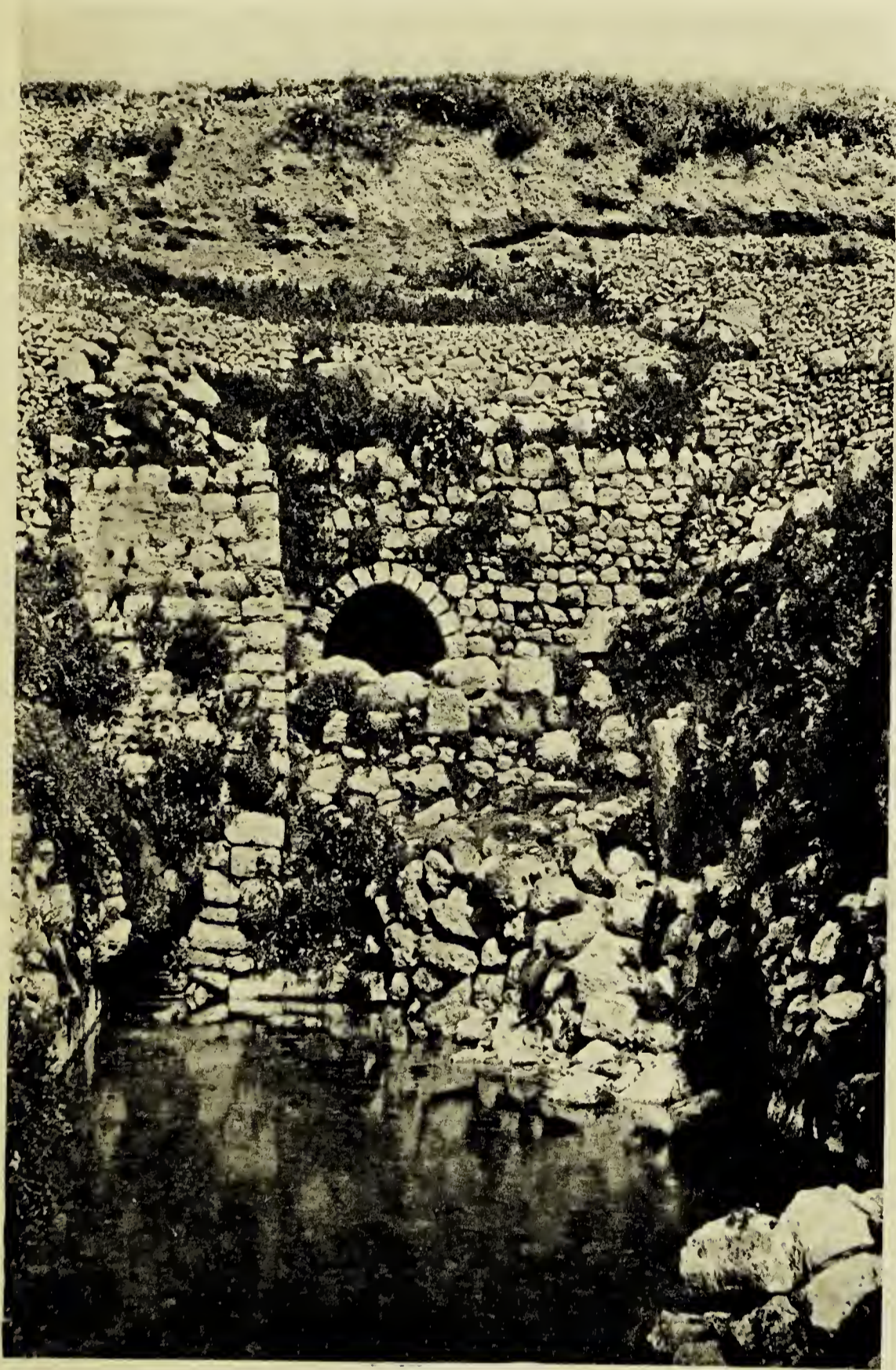
The following pools or reservoirs still exist at Jerusalem : the *Birket Mamilla*, the *Birket es Sultan*, the *Birket Sitti Mariam*, the Pool of Siloam, and a pool near the Tombs of the Kings ; these are without the walls. Within the walls there are also the Pool of Hezekiah and the Pool of Bethesda.

The *Birket Mamilla*, commonly called the Upper Pool of Gihon, is situated near the Jaffa Gate a little to the south of the road from Jaffa. If the *Birket Mamilla* is indeed the Upper Pool of Gihon, then it is the scene of

the anointing of King Solomon, as we read in 1 Kings i: 38-39, that "Zadoc, the priest, and Nathan, the prophet, caused Solomon to ride upon King David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. And Zadoc, the priest, took an horn of oil out of the Tabernacle and anointed Solomon." At a later time the Prophet Isaiah went forth to meet Ahaz "at the end of the conduit of the Upper Pool in the highway of the fuller's field" (Isa. vii: 3); and it was at the same place that Rabshakeh stood when he delivered the insulting message of his master, the King of Assyria (2 Kings xviii: 17). We read also that King Hezekiah "stopped the upper water-course (that is, the outflow of the water) of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the City of David" (2 Chron. xxxii: 30). The Birket Mamilla is undoubtedly the Serpent Pool mentioned by Josephus, a name which he may have derived from the Dragon Well of Jeremiah, which seems to have been on the west side of Jerusalem, and was probably the same (Neh. ii: 13).

The Birket Mamilla is three hundred and fifteen feet long by two hundred and eight feet wide, and its average depth is nineteen feet. Its estimated capacity is eight million gallons, but there is a large accumulation of rubbish at the bottom so that its actual capacity is considerably less. It collects the surface drainage of the upper part of the Valley of Hinnom, and is not as well situated as it might be for that purpose, but the actual situation was necessary in order to obtain a level sufficiently high to send water to the Pool of Hezekiah and to the Citadel. It is now entirely surrounded by a Mohammedan cemetery.

The *Birket es Sultan*, or the *Sultan's Pool*, is also called





the Lower Pool of Gihon. It lies lower down the Valley of Hinnom, so low indeed that its water could be serviceable only for purposes of irrigation. Its capacity was much greater than that of the Upper Pool, amounting to 19,000,000 gallons. It was formed by throwing a dam or causeway across the valley and closing the upper end by a slight embankment, the sides being formed by the natural rock. Isaiah mentions this reservoir, saying, "Ye gathered together the waters of the Lower Pool" (Isa. xxii : 9). Immediately above this pool the aqueduct from Solomon's Pools crosses the Valley of Hinnom, and a road which is probably ancient passes over the causeway. The Lower Pool of Gihon is now dry.

The Pool of Siloam is situated below the end of Ophel, at the junction of the Tyropeon Valley with the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The Upper Pool is probably the Shiloah mentioned by the Prophet Isaiah (viii : 6), whose waters "go softly," that is, secretly, by a covered or hidden way, and were refused by the people. Nehemiah records that "the wall of the Pool of Siloah, by the King's garden," was built—or rebuilt—by Shallun (Neh. iii : 15). There is little doubt that the pool thus described is the same which still bears the same name; and there is no doubt whatever that it is the very pool to which our Saviour sent the man who had been born blind to wash and recover his sight (John iv : 7-11). The tradition is unbroken and consistent. Siloam is frequently mentioned by Josephus, by the Christian Fathers, and by a long line of travellers. At one time a Christian church was built over the pool, but it has gone so completely to ruin that only the rubbish remains. The appearance of Siloam is in no way attractive. The crumbling walls and

fallen columns give it an appearance of desolation which, as Dr. Thomson says, is extreme even in that land of ruins.

The descent to the pool is as rough as to the bottom of a quarry. The basin is a parallelogram fifty-three feet long by eighteen wide, and its original depth must have been about twenty feet. The water is derived from the Spring of the Virgin, which is about 1700 feet further up the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and is brought down to Siloam through a tunnel or underground aqueduct which will presently be described. St. Jerome was the first to give an account of the irregular flow of its waters, which corresponds to some extent with a similar irregularity in the flow of the spring from which they come. A little to the east of the main pool is a lesser basin, now completely dry, into which the water of the upper pool formerly flowed. Near it grows an ancient mulberry tree supported by props of stone, and this is said to be the place where the Prophet Isaiah was sawn asunder in the presence of King Manasseh. The streamlet from the upper pool flows past the lower, and loses itself in the garden below.

“We are quite certain,” says Dr. Tristram, “that the spot is the same as that of the ancient Shiloh and the Pool of Siloam. The name has come down to us unchanged in the language of the country. An old traveller, four hundred years ago, describes this bath as surrounded by walls and buttresses like a cloister, and the arches supported by marble pillars, the remains of which have been mentioned. But this is now gone. The present pool is a ruin with no moss or ivy to make it romantic; its sides falling in; its pillars broken; its stairs



a fragment; its walls giving way; the edge of every stone worn round or sharp by time; in some parts mere *débris*; once Siloam, now—like the city which overhung it—a heap; though around its edges wild flowers and among other plants the caper tree grow luxuriantly.” Besides the caper, or hyssop of Scripture—the plant which brightens many an otherwise arid spot and hangs in dark green tufts from the walls of Jerusalem,—the sides of the inner pool are almost clothed with the fronds of the maidenhair fern, that most beautiful ornament of every well and pool in Palestine.

To the left of the main road leading northward from Jerusalem, and a little beyond the Tombs of the Kings, are the remains of another extensive pool, now nearly filled with soil washed down by the rains. It is admirably situated for collecting the surface drainage of the upper branches of the Kedron Valley, and may probably have been in ancient times the largest of all the pools in the neighborhood. Its history is unknown, and the conduit by which its water was conveyed to the city has never been discovered.

On the eastern side of Ophel, fronting the Mount of Offence and directly south of the Haram enclosure, is *Ain Sitti Mariam*, the Spring of the Virgin, which must not be confounded with *Birket Sitti Mariam*, a small pool of the same name outside and a little to the north of St. Stephen's Gate. The source of the spring is believed to be beneath the Temple vaults, whence the stream of living water is conducted by a peculiar outlet or channel to *Ain Sitti Mariam*. The flow of the Virgin's Spring is intermittent. The intermittent and remittent flow of springs is readily accounted for by the Arabs, who at-

tribute it to the agency of genie or demons; a fountain which is haunted by one of these superhuman creatures, they say, flows peacefully so long as he sleeps but as soon as he awakes it stops. Dr. Robinson compares this account of the irregular flow of Ain Sitti Mariam with the account given of the angel who "went down at a certain season into the pool (of Bethesda), and troubled the water" (John v:4); and for various reasons he thinks it worth while to consider whether Ain Sitti Mariam may not be the true Pool of Bethesda, instead of the pool which now goes by that name. He himself has no further opinion on the subject, and the general opinion seems to be that the question is not deserving of serious consideration.

The intermissions in the flow of the water of Ain Sitti Mariam are not entirely capricious, but have a certain regularity. In the rainy season the water flows from three to five times daily; in summer, twice; in autumn, only once. This is explained as follows: In the rock from which the flow comes there is supposed to be a deep natural reservoir fed by numerous rivulets or springs, and having only a narrow outlet which begins a little above the bottom of the reservoir and then rises to a higher point before descending to the Virgin's Spring. As soon as the water in the reservoir has risen to the height of the bend in the outlet it will of course begin to flow through it, and it will continue to flow, on the siphon principle, until it has sunk in the reservoir to the point where the outlet begins. The demon in the case is a well-known law of nature. There is reason to believe that the ancient inhabitants of Jerusalem were able to cut off the outlet from the inner source of the spring,

and that in time of war they were thus enabled at once to deprive besiegers of the use of the fountains without the walls.

The overflow of Ain Sitti Mariam passes to the Pool of Siloam through an underground tunnel of rude construction and of varying height. At the Siloam end it is sixteen feet high; midway between the openings it sinks to only two feet high; but as the bottom is covered with a calcareous silt two feet thick, and so hardened at the top as to support a man's weight, the passage as it was made must have had a minimum height of four feet. Curiously enough the tunnel is not straight but has several windings and a number of small chambers where the workmen, finding that they were going in a wrong direction, must have turned back and resumed their work from a different point. In 1880 an inscription in archaic Hebrew was discovered, about twenty feet above the exit of the water into the pool, recording the completion of the tunnel. This inscription has been thus translated by Professor Sayce: "Behold the excavation! Now, this has been the history of the excavation: While the workmen were still lifting up the axe, each toward his neighbor, and while three cubits still remained to be cut through, each heard the voice of the other, who called to his neighbor, since there was an excess in the rock on the right hand and on the left; and on the day of the excavation the workmen struck, each to meet his neighbor, axe against axe, and then flowed the waters from the spring to the pool for 1200 cubits, and . . . of a cubit was the height of the rock over the heads of the workmen." No names are given, nor any other data bearing directly on the date of the work, which can

therefore be only approximately judged from the form of the Hebrew characters. These are of the most ancient form; they cannot be later than the time of Hezekiah, and they may date from the age of Solomon. They furnish a specimen of the most ancient Hebrew writing—the alphabet is even older than that of the Moabite Stone—and so Dr. Tristram refers the inscription to a period probably as early as that of Solomon.

The Arabs call the Virgin's Spring *Ain Umm ed Derej*, or the Fountain of Steps, for the reason that in order to reach it one must descend a flight of twenty-seven steps, each of which is ten inches high, and the decline is steep. The water is not palatable; Dr. Robinson says it is at once sweet and brackish. The taste is partly due to drainage water which flows into the inner source and there mingles with the water of the spring; but the inhabitants of the village of Silwan, or Siloam, who dwell on the opposite side of the narrow valley, seem to be at pains to pollute the spring. When Captain Warren was passing through the tunnel he found bits of cabbage-stalks floating by him; and in fact he says "the Virgin's Fount is used as a sort of scullery for the Silwan village, the refuse thrown there being carried off down the passage each time the water rises." Of the water, Dr. Thomson says, "I never liked it, always thinking that its smell was suggestive of the bath. I have little doubt that it is mingled with the water used for Moslem ablutions and bathings in the Mosques of Omar and El Aksa, directly above the fountain. Besides, I have rarely visited it without finding women from the village of Kefr Silwan standing in it, and sometimes washing clothes upon its lower steps, as they do at the Pool of Siloam.

Altogether it is a deplorable place." If Milton had known more of the topography of the Holy City as it now is, he might have hesitated to speak so poetically of the subterranean stream from Ain Sitti Mariam as

"The brook that flowed  
Fast by the Oracle of God."

Just below the junction of the Hinnom and Kedron Valleys, and six hundred yards below the Pool of Siloam, is a well called *Bir Eyoub*, or Job's Well, but how the name can have originated is hard to guess, since it has no connection whatever with the Patriarch Job. The shaft of the well is sunk for one hundred and twenty-five feet through the solid rock, and Sir C. Warren discovered a hidden channel underground, by which water was brought to Job's Well from the Pool of Siloam. Below the well there must have been another channel; for Sir C. Warren, on opening a spring five hundred feet further down the valley, suddenly at a depth of twelve feet rolled away a stone which concealed a staircase twenty-five feet deep leading to a passage which runs both north and south. The object of so extensive a system of water-courses undoubtedly was to secure to the city an abundance of water while leaving no supply for besiegers around the walls. Thus, as the historian says, Jerusalem was emphatically "a city full of water within, but very thirsty without." At present there is no connection between the Pool of Siloam and Job's Well, as is proved by the fact that the water of the latter is pure and sweet, having no likeness to that of Siloam and the Virgin's Fount. The quantity of water in Job's Well varies greatly, seldom drying up altogether but sometimes over-

flowing and gushing out like a mill-stream. Dr. Thomson says that he has seen the whole valley alive with people, bathing in the overflowing water and indulging in every species of hilarity.

Whether Job's Well or the Virgin's Fount is the Fuller's Spring, *En Rogel*, mentioned (Josh. xv : 7) as the boundary line between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, has been much disputed. It is certainly against Job's Well that the Fuller's Spring was a spring (*En*) and not a well (*Bir*); for Job's Well is a well and not a spring. Since the sixteenth century Job's Well has been called by the Frank Christians the Spring of Nehemiah, from a Jewish tradition that the sacred fire of the Temple was concealed there during the captivity until it was recovered by Nehemiah, the leader of the returned exiles.

Within the walls of Jerusalem there are two great pools, namely, the Pool of Hezekiah and *Birket Israil*, the traditional Pool of Bethesda. The Pool of Hezekiah is situated at a little distance, somewhat north of east from the Jaffa Gate and southwest from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, midway between the two. It is supplied from the *Birket Mamilla* by an underground passage so constructed as to admit of some regulation of the flow of water. It is a remarkable work, being nearly two hundred and fifty feet in length from north to south, and there is good reason to believe that it originally extended some sixty feet further toward the north. Its average width is about one hundred and forty feet; its depth is from twelve to fifteen feet. If it were cleansed and kept with decency it would be a blessing to the inhabitants. As it is, it is an abomination. The water is utterly unfit for culinary purposes, and indeed the name

given by the Arabs to the pool is *Birket el Hammam*, or *Pool of the Bath*, otherwise more fully, *Birket Hammam el-Batrak*, the Pool of the Bath of the Patriarch, because its waters are chiefly used for filling another reservoir called *Hammam el Batrak*, or the Patriarch's Bath, not many yards to the east.

It seems to be generally conceded that this pool is rightly named from King Hezekiah. We read (2 Chron. xxxii: 2-4) that "when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem, he took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city; and they did help him. So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, 'Why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water?'" We also read (verse 30) that "this same Hezekiah stopped the upper water-course of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the City of David;" and in 2 Kings xx: 20 we read that "Hezekiah made a pool and a conduit and brought water into the city." Taking these passages together, there seems to be little if any reason to doubt that this pool, which is within the city, and which draws its water from the Upper Pool of Gihon on the west side of Jerusalem, is the very work of Hezekiah remaining to this day. It is also, in all probability, the Pool of Amygdalon, of which Josephus says that it was situated near the monument of the High Priest John.

Outside of the Temple area and at the east end of its northern wall is a pool, or rather, since it rarely now contains water, there was once a pool, extending for three

hundred and sixty feet east and west along the wall. It is one hundred and thirty feet wide, and at present seventy feet deep to the rubbish with which the bottom has been filled. It is called by the Arabs *Birket Israil*, or the Pool of Israel, but it is the traditional Pool of Bethesda. The explorations made in connection with this important work have satisfactorily proved that the Temple area was originally an isolated crag of no great extent, and that along its northern side ran a ravine which separated Mount Moriah from what was afterward Bezetha. The so-called Pool of Bethesda is formed in part of that ravine, and it may have been part of a more extensive fosse extending all along the northern end of the Temple Mount. At the southwest corner it has a system of vaults extending one hundred and thirty-four feet under the modern houses of the city, so that the extreme length of the whole pool is about five hundred feet.

Roman Catholic tradition maintains that this is Bethesda, because it likewise asserts that St. Stephen's Gate, which is directly east of the northern corner of the pool, is the ancient sheep-gate. But neither of those traditions is of any value, and *Birket Israil* can hardly have been an intermitting fountain like the Bethesda of the Gospel which was periodically "troubled" by an angel (John v : 1-16). The true Bethesda is supposed by some to be a well called *Hammam esh-Shifa*, or the Healing Bath, which is still extolled for its sanative qualities and is situated outside of the Haram enclosure or Temple area, nearly west of the Mosque of Omar. But as it is not a spring, and therefore not intermittent, it does not correspond to the Bethesda of the New Testament very much better than *Birket Israil*.



After the brief but carefully studied account of Ancient Jerusalem given in this and the previous chapter it is discouraging to be obliged to confess that only the broader outlines of the sketch can be affirmed to be certainly accurate. Dr. Thomson amusingly suggests that if the topography of Jerusalem and its environs could be submitted to a conclave composed of devout padres, learned authors, and intelligent professors from England and America, they "would scarcely agree upon a single point;" and then he continues, "It is my own impression that no ingenuity or research can reconstruct this city as our Saviour saw it or as Josephus describes it. No man knows the line of the eastern and southeastern portions of the first wall, or where the second began, or how it ran after it began, or where the third wall commenced, or one foot of its circuit afterward; and of necessity the location of castles, towers, corners, gates, pools, sepulchres, etc., etc., depending upon supposed starting-points and directions, are merely hypothetical. One hypothesis may have more probability than another, but all must share the uncertainty which hangs over the data assumed by the theorizers.

"Leaving speculations and their results to take care of themselves, may we not find some points and boundaries about which there can be no reasonable doubt?"

"Certainly there are such outlines, strongly drawn and ineffaceable, which make it absolutely certain that we have the Holy City, with all its interesting localities, before us. For example, this mount on which our cottage stands is Olivet, without a doubt; the deep valley at its base is the channel of the Kedron; that broad ravine that joins it from the west at the Well of Job is the Val-

ley of Hinnom, which is prolonged northward and then westward under the ordinary name of the Valley of Gihon. The rocky region lying in between the valleys is the platform of ancient Jerusalem—the whole of it. Within these limits there was nothing else, and beyond them the city never extended. Thus I understand the language of Josephus when he is speaking of Jerusalem, one and entire.

“We may go a step further in generalizing and with considerable confidence. The platform of Jerusalem is divided into two nearly equal parts by a valley which commences northwest of the Damascus Gate, shallow and broad at first but deepening rapidly in its course down along the Temple area until it unites with the Kedron near the Pool of Siloam. The city therefore was built upon two ridges, with a valley between them; and these grand landmarks are perfectly distinct to this day. The eastern ridge is Mount Moriah, on which stood the Temple; the western is Zion, so called; and the valley between them is that of the Tyropeon or Cheesemongers. These ridges are nearly parallel with each other, but that of Zion is everywhere the highest of the two; that is, the part of it without the present south wall is much higher than Ophel, which is over against it; the Temple area is lower than that part of Zion which is west of it, and the northwest corner of the city overlooks the whole of the ridge on which the Temple stood. This accords with the express and repeated assertions of Josephus—who however never uses the word Zion—that the hill which sustained the Upper Market Place, of the Upper City, was much the highest of all. The houses built down the western slopes of Zion everywhere face those

on the western side of the opposite ridge, and the corresponding rows of houses meet in the intervening valley, just as Josephus represents them to have done in his day. The historian wrote his description with an eye to Titus and the Roman army; and I cannot doubt that, up to our present point of generalization, we have laid down the outlines of Jerusalem as they saw and conquered it.

“If we now proceed from generalities to particulars we encounter obscurity and perplexing difficulties at every turn; and these thicken around us just in proportion as we descend to details more and more minute. For example, perhaps all the planographists of the Holy City agree that the lower part of the interior valley is that of the Cheesemongers; but higher up, where, under the name of Tyropeon, it must define the supposed position of a certain tower, the course of this valley is very earnestly contested. And thus, too, nearly all agree that the broad ridge south of the Jaffa Gate is Mount Zion; but some maintain that it terminates there at the Tower of David, while others believe that it continued up northward to the Castle of Goliath, and even beyond it. Some others assume that the Tyropeon commences at the Tower of David, and descends first eastward and then to the southeast, under the Temple area and down to Siloam, and that traces of such a valley can still be seen. Other eyes absolutely fail to discover it, and their owners say that the rain from heaven and the theodolite of the engineer obstinately refuse to acknowledge any such valley. Some place Akra north of Jaffa Gate, and others northwest of the Temple area. But we need not extend the list of conflicting theories any further, for it includes nearly every rod of the entire city—the line of every

wall, the position of every castle, the name of every pool, the place of every gate, the site of every scene, etc. On most of these questions I have my own opinion, but to state and defend them would be a most wearisome business, and as useless as it would be endless."





